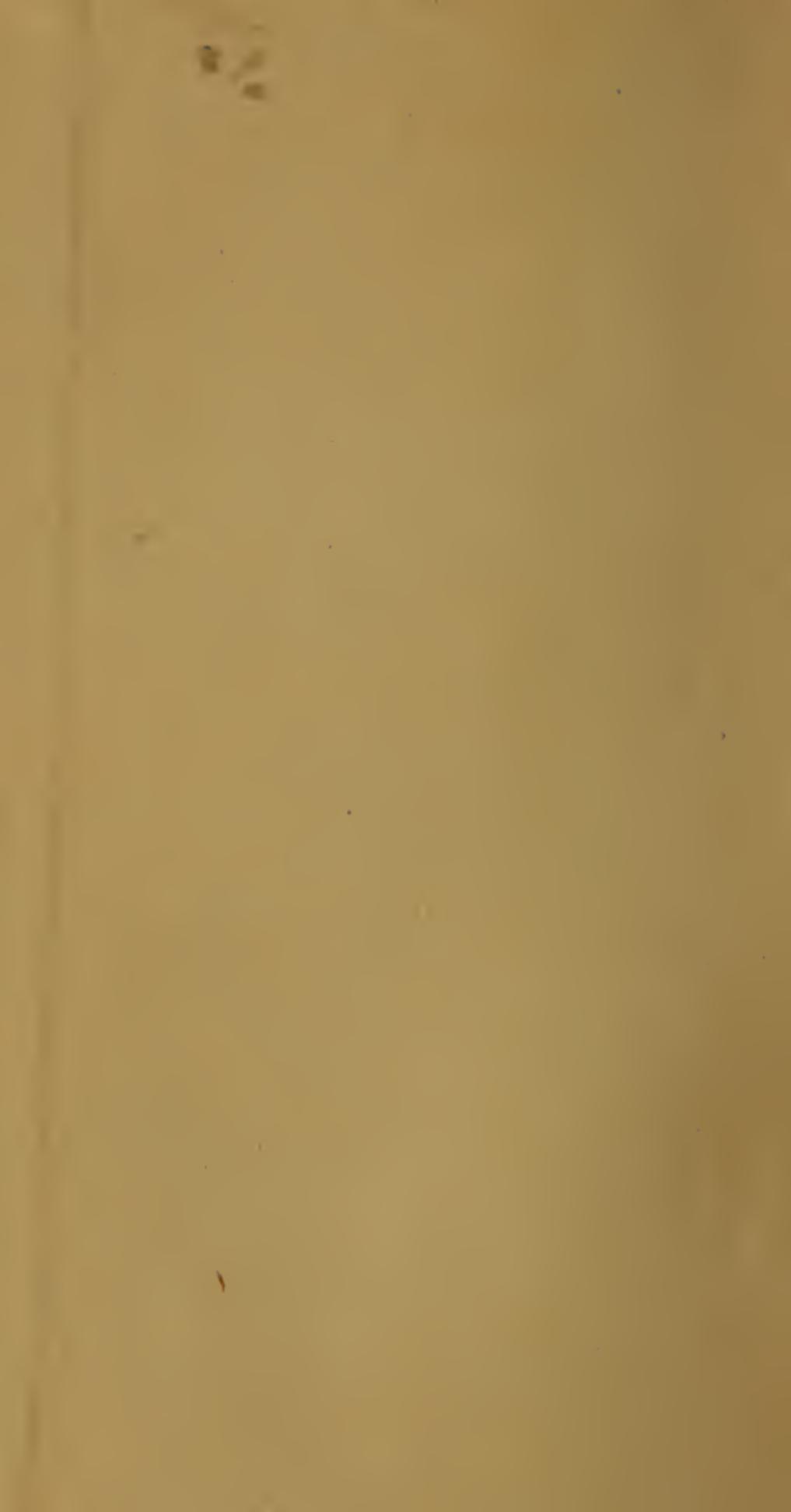




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MEMOIRS

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LETTERS

OF

MRS. MARY DEXTER,

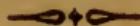
(Morton)

LATE CONSORT OF REV. ELIJAH DEXTER,

OF PLYMPTON.

BY REV. WILLIAM T. TORREY.

PRINTED BY SUBSCRIPTION AT THE OLD COLONY PRESS,



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PREFACE.

IN preparing this little volume for the press, the Compiler has discharged an office of friendship to a brother in the ministry, and endeavored to promote the interest of Zion. The publication was called for by numerous friends of the deceased, who were of the opinion that a selection from Mrs. Dexter's Diary and Letters would furnish an acceptable present to the christian public. Those letters, which gave delight and instruction upon the first perusal, they wished to circulate in the community, fully persuaded that their influence would be pure and salutary as far as it should extend.

The Compiler entertains no sanguine expectations respecting the extensive circulation of this work. It will doubtless be read with most interest by those who cherished personal esteem and respect for Mrs. Dexter while living, and would commemorate her worth, now that she has departed. The partiality of friendship may also discover some excellencies in her epistolary compositions, to which indifferent persons with critical discernment will be insensible. This little volume is expected to circulate principally in the region, where Mrs. Dexter was personally known; and, since in that region the influence of her example, of

her conversation, and of her letters was known to be salutary while she was living, it is but reasonable that her friends should wish to prolong that influence by publishing her letters after her decease. Mrs. Dexter, though dead, may still speak; her voice, if heard from the grave, will be heard in the accents of humble piety and in support of the truth of God.

Whoever peruses this book for the sake of gratifying a literary taste, or with the hope of finding able discussions on difficult points of doctrine, may be disappointed. Still we hope that it contains few offences against taste which common courtesy will not excuse; and few opinions in doctrine, which upon examination will not be found correct. The reader must expect, sentiment rather than argument; and bursts of pious feeling which carry conviction only because we can witness to their truth by our own experience. The letters contain no peculiarities in doctrine, which attract a momentary attention, because they promise the gratification of idle curiosity; neither has Mrs. Dexter said or written any thing, which others have not expressed as well before her. The subjects on which she writes are Christ and him crucified, with humiliating views of human depravity, and exalted conceptions of the Saviour's worth. She wrote on themes familiar to every christian; her confessions of sin are the confessions of every man, who knows the plague of his own heart; and she dwells upon the love of Jesus, and the efficacy of his atonement, as every believer will, when grace reigns in his heart; and whenever he seeks a basis for the hope of his soul.

Some perhaps may question the expediency of multiplying publications of this kind, lest they should either usurp the patronage which is claimed by works of superior merit; or by their own want of merit injure the cause they were intended to promote. Still it may be observed that local publications exert a local influence, which other books will not, because they will not so generally be read within that sphere; and if this influence be pure it is not to be despised. It should be regarded as a contribution to the sum of exertion which must be made, to the means which must be employed, to advance the cause of Christ, and renovate the world. Let every region of our country be filled with religious publications of correct principles, adapted to the taste and capacity of every reader, and the church in general will be instructed and improved. While some christians of cultivated minds may read with profit the discussions of learned theologians upon the doctrine of the "Eternal generation of the Son," or upon "Divine Efficiency in the production of moral evil," others of less attainments may peruse with equal advantage the life of Mrs. Graham or of Mary Dexter.

The publishers of this little volume disclaim all mercenary motives. If any profit shall arise from the sale of the work, it will be devoted to the cause of missions. Mrs. Dexter was ardently devoted to that cause while she lived, and by her letters she sometimes pleaded that cause with success. Let her writings by being published still plead for the same cause; and contribute, if they can, to the treasury of the Lord.

We have no fears that the treasury of foreign missions will ever overflow, or that the country will be impoverished by supporting a few families of missionaries in India or Palestine. Besides, we require Harriet Newells at home as well as abroad. If some must go to heathen lands to advocate the cause of Christ among the Hindoos, others must advocate the cause of Missions at home, among those who live under the light of the gospel, and yet are almost as unacquainted with their obligations to send the gospel to the heathen, as the heathen are with the gospel itself. The office of the domestic Advocate is the most ungrateful of the two ; for while the adventures and letters of the heroine who crosses the ocean are published in every magazine in the country with enthusiastic encomiums upon her disinterested zeal, the domestic advocate of equal zeal and disinterestedness meets with more reproaches than praises for her untiring assiduity in persuading the rich to contribute of their abundance, and the poor to bestow their mites and their prayers.

The Compiler has admitted into the volume but few extracts from Mrs. Dexter's Diary, and those extracts which have been inserted are intended rather as a specimen of what it is, than as a publication of the Diary itself. This course has been pursued, not because it was apprehended that Mrs. Dexter's reputation as a christian would suffer by any disclosure the Diary contains ; but because it was believed that her letters were more proper for publication. A Diary should possesss uncommon excellence to be worthy of

publication. It should be a faithful delineation of all the exercises of the heart, or it will not contain what it professes to exhibit. If it be a record of pious feelings only, and still bear the title of a Diary, it will not be true to nature. If it contain only a record of one's weaknesses, and idle vagaries of fancy, it will not deserve to be read. If it contain a faithful exhibition of all one's pious exercises and unholy feelings, blended and combined as they are in the human heart, tho' it be in reality sanctified in part, it will be read by many who will not be able to distinguish the precious from the vile, and readers will be in danger of applauding what they ought to disapprove, and of imitating not another's excellences, but his weakness and his faults. Besides there is a degree of indelicacy in intruding into the private devotions of a christian in his closet; and of exhibiting to the gaze of the world those meditations he has written for the perusal of none but himself—and would probably wish to keep concealed from all except himself and his God. In making extracts from the Diary the compiler has endeavored both to gratify surviving friends, and at the same time show no disrespect to the deceased.

The Compiler has endeavored to exclude from this book every thing which would wound the feelings of an individual. Whether in this respect he has succeeded he is not perhaps a competent judge. Letters which contain allusions to religious controversies may hurt the feelings of some, when nothing offensive was designed; and letters, persuading a friend or brother in the tenderest style to become reconciled to God,

will necessarily convey indirect reproof for neglecting the grace of God which bringeth salvation ; and that, which in a private letter would be received even with gratitude as affectionate advice, will appear when published like public reproach. Still it is believed the volume contains nothing which ought to give offence ; and nothing it is hoped which will prejudice the immortal interests of any individual. Such as it is, it is now sent into the world with few claims to public patronage and none to public applause.

Mrs. Dexter while living desired nothing so ardently as to advance the cause of God on earth ; if her letters by being printed after her decease subserve in the smallest degree the interest of one immortal being, it will to say the least accord with the benevolent feelings of her heart.

MEMOIRS OF MRS. DEXTER.

To pay a just tribute to the memory of departed worth, and to circulate more extensively those letters which gave delight and instruction upon the first perusal ; to furnish an acceptable present to those who take pleasure in tracing the operations of the human mind under the influence of religion, and to pay homage to the grace of God in forming a character to piety and virtue is the object of the following memoirs.

Mrs. Dexter was not distinguished for eminence of station, and splendid achievements ; nor was her life signalized by any incidents, which awaken intense interest or admiration. This is the lot of few ; and those, who attain to this distinction, are not always the purest characters, nor most remarkable either for happiness or usefulness. The Diary and Letters, of which this volume will principally consist, will exhibit a character at once amiable and pious ; exerting an influence, in the sphere in which she moved, purely devoted

to the interest of piety and virtue. Her views of the doctrines of christianity were according to the strictest orthodoxy, yet without a sectarian spirit ;—her compositions breathe the spirit of a humble and fervent piety ; and never exhibit the humor of a disputant, or advocate for any controverted tenet in a system of theology. She was too amiable in her disposition ever to dispute ; but her heart was impressed with the truth as it is in Jesus ; and she may be said without doubt to have received “the love of the truth, that she might be saved.” Her Diary was written for the perusal of none but herself, and possibly her children after her decease.* Her letters were written only for her familiar friends, to whom they were addressed ; certainly not for publication. This circumstance adds to their value ; for had she even feared they would ever have been made public, they would not have been those easy, unstudied effusions of pious feeling, which please because they are natural, and exhibit her sentiments as they were in truth without the least concealment or disguise.

Mrs. Dexter was the only daughter of Nathaniel Morton Esq. of Freetown, in Massachusetts. She was born on the 28th of Sept. 1785. She derived her birth from those who call upon the name of the Lord, and are comprised by the church among her most efficient members and friends. Of her

family connexions, who still survive to lament her loss, it is sufficient to observe they are among the most respectable in our land. She was dedicated to God by her parents in childhood and received baptism at that early age. She was also brought up in the fear of God. It may be said that she received not only a virtuous, but a pious education.

The days of her early youth were spent with her affectionate parents in comparative seclusion from the world, and not in the circles of gayety and fashion. Her natural disposition was uncommonly mild and amiable; adapted to conciliate the esteem of all her associates. From her childhood she was familiar with the holy scriptures; and was instructed in the doctrines and duties of religion.—Christian instruction appears to have imbued her mind at an early age with salutary impressions; and contributed to produce that unaffected piety for which she became distinguished in subsequent life.

Besides attending such schools as are common in almost every neighborhood in New England, she enjoyed the advantage of attending an Academy taught by the Rev. Calvin Chaddock, in Rochester, at a short distance from her father's house. Here she attended one year. Her parents, impressed with the importance of giving her a good education, afterward placed her under the care and in-

struction of Mrs. Rowson, who taught an Academy for young ladies at Medford. Mrs. R's School was thought to be the first in the State for young ladies at that time.

After her return from Medford, and before she was sixteen years of age, she undertook the instruction of the female department in the Academy of Rev. Mr. Chaddock in her own vicinity, and continued in that employment several years. This shews that her talents and acquirements were held in high estimation by those who were most intimate with her in youth. Miss Morton was elevated to the chair of instruction among the young ladies of her own age, and in her own immediate neighborhood. This was a tribute to her superior worth.

Miss Morton was also engaged as Preceptress in the Academy at South-Bridgwater.—In the spring of 1808, when she was about 22 years of age, she went to New Bedford, and opened a school for young ladies upon her own responsibility. She continued her school in that place for three seasons with high approbation. Wherever she was engaged in this employment, she gained the esteem and confidence of her pupils in no common degree. She took peculiar delight in imparting instruction to the youthful mind, and endeavored to inspire her scholars, with a love of useful learning. She lamented, that in the

course of instruction usually pursued in the education of young ladies, so much attention should be bestowed upon merely polite and ornamental accomplishments; and she endeavored especially to store their minds with useful knowledge and give them a taste for solid learning. She was so much attached to the employment of an Instructress, that she even continued it at Plympton, after her connexion with the Rev. Mr. Dexter, when her domestic cares, and her devotedness to "labors of love" becoming one in the station of a clergyman's wife might well have excused her from all such engagements.

While at Bridgwater her attention appears by her letters to have been devoted to reading in her leisure hours. History and works of taste especially appear to have attracted her principal attention. Her correspondence at this time does not breathe that air of piety, which was disclosed at a later period of her life. She always manifested a respectful deference to religion; but nothing is known deeply to have impressed her mind, until some time in the year 1806, at Bridgwater, she received a letter from her mother, relating the conversion of one of her intimate female friends, at New Bedford. This information affected her, and she resolved that, if her life was spared to the close of her school, she would give her attention to the subject of re-

ligion. The following winter, which she spent with her parents at Freetown, furnished her a favorable opportunity of fulfilling her resolution. A Mr. Smith, of Hollis, then a candidate preacher, and afterwards a settled minister of the gospel, was laboring in that parish, and boarded at her Father's. The conversation and preaching of Mr. S. at once enlightened and impressed her mind, and she was induced to give herself wholly unto the Lord, and to hope in his grace. She always retained a grateful recollection of the fidelity and kindness of Mr. Smith as her instructor in Christ. She appears from this time to have "chosen that good part, which should not be taken from her." Her letters, subsequent to this date, are almost exclusively upon religious subjects, and prove that she had sincerely consecrated herself to God, and had resolved by divine assistance to maintain the character of a consistent christian.

The following extract from one of her letters to a young lady, with whom she was in habits of intimacy, will show what occupied her mind at this time.

"The present season the time I have spent in reading has been bestowed on books of a serious nature. In them I think I have found more real satisfaction than I ever enjoyed in any amusements whatever. The transient nature of worldly delights, and the want of

real happiness, which every one, even in the highest career of dissipation, must acknowledge, speaks in the loudest language, that we ought to seek more permanent enjoyments. "Lean not on earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart," is a truth which daily experience confirms; yet we will bar our hearts against conviction, and divine power is necessary to make us fully sensible of the important truth.—It is thought by many, and I must acknowledge that I have been one of the number, that the serious realities of death and eternity, and the business of religion are fit only for the aged, and infirm. But, Alas, fatal delusion! Have we not reason to fear that many blooming youths have been swept off the stage of life, the dupes of this dangerous error, and found themselves fatally deceived?

Miss Morton made profession of religion at New Bedford, during her residence there, and when the Rev. Curtis Coe was supplying the pulpit in that place. She was at times the subject of doubts respecting the genuineness of her religion, because her conviction was not so powerful, nor the first evidence of her spiritual change so clear as she supposed others possessed. Her views of divine truth however were clear, and her affections she could not doubt were "placed on things above." The relation she gave of the exercises of her mind upon her uniting with the

church was distinguished for diffidence and humility, and was very concise. The most striking passages it contains are the following. After alluding to the time when her mind was first impressed, she observed,

“I humbly trust I was brought to see myself a vile sinner, wholly estranged from God, and opposed to his character. I saw that the justice of God would shine bright in my eternal condemnation; and that I could make no claim to any thing better; and that, if ever I was saved, it must be by free and sovereign grace. I have sometimes felt strength to hope and believe, that God has convinced me of his absolute right to dispose of me as he sees fit, and has reconciled me to himself thro’ Jesus Christ.”—“I desire to look to him alone for strength to perform every duty, and particularly that I may be assisted by the Holy Spirit in solemnly dedicating myself to God before the world.”

From the following letter, in which she appears to have disclosed her most secret feelings without reserve to an intimate female friend, we perceive what were her exercises and mental conflicts upon making public profession.

TO MRS. E. F.

How shall I, my dear friend, express my gratitude to you for your goodness, of which

I am so unworthy ? I accept as a very great favour your last letter, and also the one which accompanied it, containing an answer to the question I proposed in my first letter. The question is answered agreeably to my mind, and gives me great satisfaction.

‘ I think it is my desire to be made acquainted with the whole will of God, and I hope I have some right desires to do it, when acquainted with it; but I have many doubts as to the reality of my submission and reconciliation so God. I find in myself still such an evil heart of unbelief that I am at times ready to give up all hope, that I have known any thing of true religion. I humbly desire your prayers for me, that if I never have submitted to God, and received Christ as my Prophet, Priest, and King, I may not be left to grieve away the Holy Spirit, nor be given over to hardness of heart, and a reprobate mind. But if I have through infinite mercy received a spark of divine grace, O may my faith be strengthened, and may I be built up in the faith of the gospel. It appears to me astonishing that any can disbelieve the depravity of human nature,—I mean those who profess to know what religion is ;—for those who are in a state of nature we cannot suppose to be sensible of this truth. If they were, their security would be disturbed, and they would be necessitated to seek for security out of them-

selves.—But I have seen some professors of religion who deny the depravity of man and contend that he is born with a principle, which, if cultivated, will lead him to heaven. Their views on this subject however are very different from mine. I see enough of the conduct of mankind every day to convince me of this truth; but more especially do I feel it in myself. At sometimes it rises to such a height, that I am ready to cry out, “who shall deliver me”? and even at best, when I would do good, evil is present with me. What but a nature entirely depraved could be opposed to the character of the blessed God, and when we are in some measure made sensible of his glorious perfections, should retard our progress in the spiritual life, and make us so cold and dead in his service. But the believer has a sure hope that he shall be delivered from all these corruptions, and be able through Christ to gain the victory “over death, hell and sin.” Great are the privileges of those who are redeemed from destruction not with corruptible things, as silver and gold but with the precious blood of the Son of God. Surely we are not our own, for we are bought with a price. And what an amazing price! Angels adore and wonder at such a display of wisdom, justice and mercy. But, man, stupid sinful man, even the vile being for whom the price was

paid, can view it with indifference and even contempt. Be astonished, O Earth, at such ingratitude!

I am a poor weak and sinful creature, but I hope God will pardon my iniquities, give me a new heart, and use me as a humble instrument to do his will, and promote his glory. Pray for me, that I may be enabled to devote myself wholly to his service, and do all things from a regard to his glory. God giving me leave, and giving me strength, I hope soon to own God before men, and publicly profess myself a follower of Jesus. It is a solemn transaction. O pray that I may not be suffered to do it in my own strength. That the Comforter may dwell in your heart richly is the sincere wish of your unworthy friend.'

M. M.

The following extract from a letter to the same person, relates to the same subject.

New Bedford, May 1, 1809.

Friend A. and myself have felt it a duty and very great privilege to enjoy the ordinances of Christ, and have been examined and this day propounded for admission into this church. I fear I do not sufficiently realize the solemnity of these things. But I pray God to strengthen us, and to enable us to enter into solemn covenant with him, with a deep

sense of our vileness and unworthiness. May we receive strength from the great and good Shepherd, who has promised to carry the lambs in his bosom. Will you pray that we may be enabled to look to Christ alone for strength and support, and have grace to regard the glory of God as the greatest and best object of pursuit. May he never leave us to dishonour his great and holy name. I sometimes think I have a desire to devote myself to the service of God; but my heart is so deceitful and wicked, that I have reason to fear it deceives me.

‘I think you enjoy a great blessing in Mr. T. and I trust God will enable you to make a wise improvement of that, and of all his other blessings. Mr. T’s sermons on Baptism I found at home on my return last winter, and I think I have reason to bless God for it. They throw great light on many things, that I could never before understand, and in my apprehension explain the scriptures according to their true meaning. We live in a highly favored day. Gospel light shines with great splendor around us, and we have many means of becoming acquainted with our Master’s will, and of glorifying his name. If we know these things, happy are we if we do them. I hope you will continue to write to your unworthy friend, whose desires are for your great enlargement, and usefulness in your Master’s service.

M. M.

In January 1809, Mrs. Dexter, then Miss Morton, commenced a Diary and continued it with some interruptions for several years. In this she has strongly depicted her feelings, and shown herself extremely humble in self-estimation. At the same time that her friends were commanding her for uncommon purity of mind and giving her praise for piety, she was mourning her corruptions of heart before God, acknowledging herself "the chief of sinners."

In her Diary she did not confine herself to mental exercises merely, but has noticed such occurrences as interested her, having reference however to her spiritual improvement at the same time. All she wrote discovers a mind sincerely engaged in religion.

September 28, 1810.

"By the help of God I have continued unto this day commencing my 26th year. Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. Every year, month, day and moment have I been living upon the undeserved mercy of God. While thousands have been called into eternity since my birth, I am spared, and am alive this evening, a witness for thee, O God, that thou art good, and doest good to the evil and unthankful. I must witness for thee, though against myself. The Lord will be forever glorious and good, if I

lie down in everlasting sorrow and despair. O that I may be exceedingly humbled in taking a retrospect of my past mispent life. Of the small part of my life which can now be called to remembrance what millions and millions of sins appear to my view. Wilt thou, O God, show me the infinite evil of sin, and give me true contrition of spirit and brokenness of heart. And, since there is no other propitiation for sin, except the blood of Christ, let me never seek any other way of cleansing. May that be applied to my poor polluted soul, that my sins may be forgiven, my conscience purged from the guilt of sin, and my soul renewed and sanctified, made like unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of salvation.

I have professed to be a disciple of Christ. O may I not be a Judas; but may I be in sincerity and truth a follower of the Lamb. Too long have I lived in sin and folly, too long despised the Savior, and joined the great Adversary of God and man. May I no longer serve him, but may the all conquering grace of God pluck me as a brand from the burning, and make of a bitter enemy a faithful friend. Let me mourn that I have lived no more to God, since taking the vows of the Lord upon me. Where shall I hide my guilty head? How shall I appear to answer before my Judge? There is no other way but to return to him from whom I have revolted, and come

to the fountain of Christ's blood. May the Spirit of God apply it to my soul, and make me to deny myself, submit to God, and devote myself unreservedly to his blessed service. O this once, if never before, may my soul be stript of every "refuge of lies," all self dependence, be brought to trust wholly, humbly, and sincerely on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make a full and unreserved surrender of my all into the hands of God. In future may I live to his glory, and not to myself.

'This evening I have enjoyed the undeserved favor of hearing that excellent servant of God, Mr. S. preach from Ex. 33, 7. May the word be set home with power upon my heart, and on the hearts of God's dear children. May the blessing of God make it to all of us as good seed sown on good ground, bringing forth fruit to the praise of God.—Let us gratefully remember the divine goodness in sending him here and putting that word in his mouth to speak unto us, and may he be rewarded an hundred fold into his own bosom.

'He who knows all things knows whether I shall close my 26th year, this day begun in this world. O may I be made to meditate much on the solemn realities of eternity, and may I be prepared by riches of free, sovereign, electing grace to follow my dear deceased sister into the eternal world. May the language of my soul be, God be merciful

to me a sinner,—make me a humble instrument of his glory, that my life may be useful, and my death a sleep in Jesus, through whose name I beg these infinite favors?

The person to whom she alludes in these meditations, and calls her “dear departed sister,” was Mrs. Clarissa Dexter, the first wife of him with whom she was some years afterward connected in marriage herself.—They had been members of the same church, and lived in habits of intimacy with each other, while they both resided at New-Bedford.

Her Diary, Oct. 21, contains the following reflections.

‘In conversation with a christian friend I received an account of the state of Mrs. C. Dexter’s mind during her last illness. Though in extreme bodily distress her mind was at peace, and she was filled with resignation. Christ was her hope, her joy, her all. This and much more might be said in proof of her heavenly temper,—her preparedness for glory. Let me bless God in her behalf, and may his holy Spirit enable me to profit by her dying advice, “to make Christ my friend while in health.” Important, all important advice! O let me search and see that my hopes are well founded, that I may not be deceived by my treacherous heart. As I must pass

thro' the same dark valley, may I be prepared while in health, and may all the remains of my life be devoted to the service of Christ.'

After recording some observations made by Mrs. C. Dexter in her last sickness, she proceeds.

'What resignation, what consoling hopes does Jesus give his friends, when their flesh and heart fail ! Let my portion be with his people here, that I may enjoy their society in heaven. And though they may be afflicted and despised, yet may divine grace enable me to choose with Moses " rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.'

Knowing the subsequent events of her life, and her marriage connexion, we perceive that these her pious wishes were gratified, and her prayers answered, though in a manner which she then least expected. I cannot forbear also to notice in this place an observation of Mrs. Dexter to a visiting friend in her own last sickness. In the above extract from her Diary is expressed a desire to enjoy the society of the people of God in heaven. In her last sickness, she observed to a christian friend, " we all think much of enjoying the society of our friends in the world of spirits. Why is it that we do not think more of enjoying the society of Christ in heaven ? Paul

wished to depart and to be *with Christ*." He was not indeed insensible to the joyful hope of meeting his converts before the throne, but the hope of enjoying the presence of his Redeemer in glory was that which gave him peculiar joy.

October 23, She thus expresses herself in her Diary.

'O thou who art infinite in compassion, show me still more and more the importance of securing an interest in the Savior's love. Thou knowest my doubts and fears. Thou, who searchest the hearts and triest the reins of the children of men, knowest my real state. Will thou graciously grant the influence of thy holy spirit to lead my mind into all truth. O make me a sincere and firm believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. O forbid that I should live and die a hypocritical professor of thy holy religion; but may it be stamped on my heart, and transform it into thy holy image.

'Lord, let me not in a spiritual sense, "turn back to take any thing out of the house." Let me not presume to look back; but may I be made to feel deeply the importance of escaping from the place devoted to destruction without a moments delay, lest I be forever too late. O that I might enter on the christian race by the door, be stripped entirely of all

false dependence, rest safely on the grace of God in Christ, for present support and future triumph, put on the gospel armour, and run with patience the race set before me, looking unto Jesus.

Awake, our souls, to run the christian race,
Nor tarry longer in this dangerous place.

The following devotional reflections show great religious sensibility, and fear of self-deception in regard to her evidence of an interest in Christ.

‘What a solemn and awfully dangerous state is that of one, who has a name to live in the church of Christ, while destitute of true religion. Certainly the state of gospel hypocrites will be the most wretched of any of the inhabitants of the dark world of despair. In proportion to the means of grace, they have despised and misimproved, will be their condemnation. Language cannot express the anguish and horror, which must forever prey upon their guilty consciences. I think I have been this day near the borders of despair, and have had a faint view of the anguish of the awakened hypocrite. I am as it were chained down by the sin of unbelief. My transgressions stare me in the face. I am undone completely as to any remedy in myself, and must eternally perish, unless sovereign mercy prevent. By my obstinate wickedness I

provoked the Most High to cut me off as a wretched cumberer of the ground. Though in some measure sensible of my guilt and danger, I cannot come to Christ for salvation, unless the Father draw me, and the only reason that I cannot, is because of the obstinate wickedness of my heart. This is my state, exposed to wrath eternal and naturally opposed to the only way of escape.

O Lord, if thou wilt graciously be pleased to appear for my deliverance in thine own time and way, thy rich grace will deserve all the glory; but if thou leave me to my own chosen ways of rebellion, thou wilt be just and every mouth must be stopped, or must justify thy ways. Even so, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways. Yea, thou wouldst be just and glorious, shouldst thou leave all our sinful race to reap the fruit of their own doings. It is grace, rich, free, and boundless, that thou shouldst save any.

‘O God, be pleased graciously to keep me from a presumptuous hope, and a slavish fear; but let me plead, that thy spirit may work in my heart that good hope thro’ grace, which shall lead me to all holy obedience, and a sincere desire for thy glory. O Lord, I stand in perishing need of that, which the whole race of men would vainly attempt to give, neither can angels grant it. Thou, and thou only canst bestow it on me. Let thy wonder-

ful grace triumph over my awfully aggravated sins, and make me a vessel of mercy, prepared for some humble use in thy church.'

The above extract from her Diary, discovers great lowness of mind; great fear of self-deception; and great sensibility to the evil of sin. That these expressions were not the mere effusions of her feelings in a moment of darkness and gloom; but were the result of her deliberate convictions, the following extract will clearly evince.

‘ What does sin merit but eternal punishment from the just and holy Governor of the Universe? It must be so, for God would cease to be a holy Being, if he did not always manifest his displeasure against sin. That, which has a direct and powerful tendency to destroy all good, and all happiness, must necessarily be extremely offensive and hateful to infinite benevolence. Were sin unrestrained by infinite power, it would certainly introduce complete misery, confusion, and anarchy into the whole system of the intelligent creation.

‘ Where there is in any object complete sinfulness without any holiness, it must in itself be extremely hateful in the view of a holy God. But what is in the heart of every natural man? Sin without any mixture of holiness. Certainly then it cannot be that God can be pleased with such hearts, or with any thing which proceeds from them; and the

mercies, he bestows on beings whose hearts are thus depraved, flow not from any complacency in them. Since the heart is wholly sinful, there can no good thing proceed from it; and if it ever be made clean, it must be by a power not its own. If any mercy be shown, that mercy must be unmerited; for the desert of sin is eternal damnation.

As it is in the nature of sin to be opposed to all good, so the benefits of the atonement for sin, though of infinite value, will be opposed by the sinner, unless he be made willing to accept them by a power superior to his own. This is proved by these texts "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." "My people shall be willing in the day of my power."

Such pictures of the human heart may appear to the proud boasters of the dignity of human nature entirely false, or at least unreasonably exaggerated; but I believe the scriptures of truth will fully authorize such representations; and, though they are extremely humiliating, yet we ought to know our true characters, lest we be lifted up in our own conceits. If God says, "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the Lord search the heart; I try the reins"—intimating that none but himself can know it, it certainly becomes us to believe and confess it with

shame and confusion of face. If the Bible speak in such expressive language and in numerous passages of the wickedness of the natural heart, surely it becomes us to accept the character, given us by inspiration; to humble ourselves before God; beseech his mercy to apply the blood of cleansing to our polluted hearts, that we may not utterly perish in our iniquities.'

On perusing her Diary and Letters, her expressions frequently remind us of the confessions of the Apostle respecting himself, that he was "less than the least of all saints," and, "the chief of sinners." She thus comments upon the words of Job, "wherefore I abhor myself." How suitable these words for such as have drunken in iniquity like water; have as it were mocked in the face of Omnipotence; despised all his commands; set at nought all his counsels; and rejected all his gracious offers of mercy. It is utterly impossible for language to express the exceeding evil of sin, because it is infinite; and no creature can exercise repentance according to the greatness of his guilt. O that my obstinately wicked heart were broken for sin. A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Let me therefore plead, that he, who is exalted to be a Prince and a Savior to give repentance and remission of sins, may commission the blessed Comforter "to

reprove me of sin." If not deceived I long to have a broken and contrite heart, and to walk softly before God. And surely no one can have more reason to be humble and brokenhearted than I have. Help me, O Lord, to receive that "faithful saying," which the Apostle says "is worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" of whom, he adds, "I am chief." Surely "the chief of sinners" is my character: and, as greatest in sin, so gracious Lord make me lowest in humility, and most fervent in repentance. O save me from sin. Purge me with hyssop; cleanse me with the blood of sprinkling. Draw me by the powerful cords of love to the foot of the cross. There let me rest; and no where else let me have a moments peace, except in entire, unreserved submission, and dependence on the perfect atonement made by a crucified Savior. Conscious that I have crucified him afresh, and put him to open shame, O let me return with weeping eyes and broken heart to him, for he alone is able and willing to save unto the uttermost all, who come unto God by him. May a sense of the excellency, greatness, and holiness of God, his love to sinners, and a sense of my own hateful character, make me truly humble and fearfully watchful against sin.'

The following is in a style of animated and pure devotion.

‘ Help me, O Lord, by thine all subduing, all purifying grace to feel and say sincerely, and enable me to appeal to thee, who knowest all things for the sincerity of my heart, that thy glory is my only joy. O purify from selfishness, covetousness, and every unhallowed pollution this deceitful heart of mine ; and may thy Holy Spirit work in me those fruits of righteousness, which shall be pleasing in thy pure eyes. May the clean white robe of Christ’s righteousness be cast about me, that I may be fitted to appear in thy presence with joy and rejoicing. O God, there is no other way, in which a poor sinner can see thy face and live. This is the wedding garment in which my soul desires to appear.

The following extract we presume accords with the feelings of many professors, who are conscious of deficiency in discharging their duty toward their friends and fellowmen.

‘ What reason have we to lament, that we are no more engaged for the salvation of our fellow creatures. How can it be that Christians, who have themselves been made partakers of the blessings of the gospel, can be indifferent about the souls of others. Sure it is a very unfavorable mark.—“ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his ; ” and we well know that our Lord engaged in the salvation of souls. He endured the cross, despising the shame, and so ought

we;—but alas, I have reason to be utterly confounded on account of my awful indifference about the eternal welfare of my fellow-sinners. I am afraid to speak to them on their dangerous situation, to warn them of their approaching destruction, lest I should be deemed uncivil, and injure my reputation among my fellow worms. Let me seriously reflect on this interrogation, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? O compassionate Intercessor, send thy Holy Spirit to raise my views above this little moment of life to that eternity which is before me. Make me faithful, desiring to approve myself unto God, and not regarding the opinion of this world; graciously humble me, and prepare me to do some little good in thy cause. But O, what an infinite condescension, if the infinitely holy God should employ such a vile wretch as a means of doing good. But the High and Lofty One does condescend to use clay as a means of accomplishing his ends.—Still let it never be forgotten, that it is he who does the work; otherwise the instrument would be no more than a useless grain of sand on the sea shore. “Of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory forever.”

July 23, 1812.

Upon occasion of the State Fast on account

of the Declaration of War, she thus writes in her Diary.

“ Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.” Is it not a great thing to fast in such a manner as will be pleasing in the sight of a Being of infinite purity? Our hearts are prone to evil; we put light for darkness, and darkness for light, calling good evil, and evil good. We love iniquity and delight in vain confidence. We have been highly blessed of God in temporal and spiritual favours. Though our beginning was small, yet we have been raised to a rank among the nations of the earth. Thou hast crowned us, O Lord, with loving-kindness and tender mercy. Our fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them from all that rose up against them. The wars and distress of other nations have been a means of increasing our riches; and we have been blessed with peace and plenty; while others have been scourged with famine and blood-shed. In spiritual things our blessings have been more than can be reckoned up, or counted for multitude. They are more than the hairs of our heads. Thou, Lord, hast blessed us, because thou delightest to bestow thy favours in a sovereign way. The found-

ation of our state was laid in supplication and prayer, and for many years this land was remarkable for piety and good order. And since we have apostatized from the purity and zeal of our forefathers, thou hast not utterly rejected our churches; but hast been wonderfully displaying thy rich grace in remarkable revivals of religion in many places. Very many towns and villages have been visited with the powerful influences of the divine spirit, to take out of them a people for the Lord, and prepare them for his glorious service. Lord, we would bless thy name, that thou hast stirred up a spirit of engagedness for the conversion of the heathen; and hast in years past blessed such labours with success. And of late a missionary spirit is increasing, and we hope for a continuance of the divine benediction. But it is in vain to attempt an enumeration of the blessings. The growing numbers would never end. And now let us inquire, what returns we have made for these unspeakable benefits? O Lord, I fear that we have, like Jeshurun, "waxed fat and kicked;" that we have requited thee evil for all the good thou hast done unto us; that we have hardened our necks against God, and lightly esteemed the Rock of our salvation. O Lord, set our sins in order before us, and may we see their aggravations, their heinous nature, their dreadful malignity. May thine

own people be first in confessing their iniquities. May they separate themselves from strangers, and stand and confess their sins before God. May they turn unto thee heartily; justify thee in all thy dealings; and take shame and confusion to themselves. O may they, with their whole hearts, turn unto thee, each knowing the plague of his own heart, lamenting his own sins, and sighing and crying for all the abominations, which are done in the land. Lord, we have reason to weep in secret places, that the gold has become dim. We have reason to fear that the salt of many of our churches has lost its savour. The Lord's Day is wickedly disregarded. A spirit of strife and contention is apparent among us, a haughty overbearing spirit is too prevalent. O do thou, gracious Lord, prepare our hearts and turn us unto thyself. Do thou work in us such a reformation, as shall be pleasing in thy sight. Do thou stir us up to sincere repentance, and help us to bring forth the fruit thereof. O Lord, save us from that sin, which is a reproach to any people, and give us that righteousness, which exalteth a nation. O do thou make us holy, humble, faithful, and prepare us for the speedy removal of the judgments, which have come upon us. May we yet be spared, and may thy church arise and shine forth, the glory of this land, and her defence against her foes.

May her walls be salvation and her gates praise. May the Lord be a wall of fire round about us, and the glory in the midst. May Jesus reign here the King of this nation, the Head of his Church, the Savior of his people. Do thou, O God, for Christ's sake hear, answer, forgive, and defer not. To thee would we desire to commit our cause; we are distressed by thy righteous displeasure; we deserve more than is laid upon us, and we desire to justify thee, whatever thou shalt lay upon us. Yet Lord, for thine own name's sake and for thy mercy's sake, we beseech thee, that thou wouldst bring us to repentance and prepare us for the removal of thy chastising hand, and a deliverance from thy fiercer rebukes. To whom shall we go but unto thee; for thou art a God of compassion and tender mercy. We would leave our country, guilty as it is, our perishing souls, our nearest friends, our *all*, in thy gracious hands, praying to be received through Jesus Christ. In him may we ever be found; and to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost shall be ascribed ceaseless praises now and ever more.'

July 27th 1812,

"To be carnally minded is death; for the carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to his law; neither indeed can be; so then they that are in the flesh cannot

please God." Thou, O God, seest my carnal heart,—" earthly, sensual, devilish." Can it be that such a heart has ever been renewed by divine grace. Of all beings I have most reason to abhor myself. Nothing can express my exceeding pollution. Lord, I am vile, and am unaffected with a sense of it. Do thou in great mercy set my sins in order before me, and give me true repentance, godly sorrow. Above all things, gracious Lord, preserve me from insensibility to the evil of sin. O place it before me in all its horrid colours; let me see it, and learn my own deformity, and to abhor myself. O thou blessed Advocate, who sittest at the right hand of the Majesty on high, who art exalted as a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins unto Israel, do thou undertake my cause. Thou knowest all things, therefore thou art acquainted with all the heinous aggravations of my offences; thou knowest the deep-rooted alienation of my soul, and the secret abominations of my heart, thou knowest my proneness to wander, to swell with pride, to neglect thee and every thing right; thou knowest even the most secret pollution of thought. Wilt thou, in infinite compassion, cause me to see and feel, and mourn with holy indignation against such iniquity. O make me to feel something of that sorrow for sin, which weighed thee down with "sweat, as it

were great drops of blood," when the Lord laid on thee the iniquity of us all. O that I might be in some good measure sensible of thy sufferings for sin. And O forbid that I should now add to my already unmeasurable guilt the awful obstinacy of unbelief; let me not refuse to come to thee, in whom all fulness dwells, who hast brought in everlasting righteousness, and who hast given every possible encouragement to sinners to return and live. O display Almighty power and infinitely rich grace in cleansing and sanctifying my soul, preparing me for thy kingdom. Take possession of my heart, and bring every thought into sweet subjection to thy will. O let my soul be delivered from the bondage of Satan, and brought into the liberty of the children of God. Thou art an able and willing Savior. O make me thine, entirely thine, in time and in eternity. Lord be merciful to me a sinner.

August — 1812.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus *with himself*.—The other would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven but smote on his breast, saying God be merciful to me a sinner." I am led by this representation to suppose, that there is an unspeakable difference

between *praying with one's self*, and *praying to God*. A habit of performing the external act of prayer, a lively imagination, a complacency in one's own supposed goodness, and a variety of other causes, may lead a person with an unchanged, unsanctified heart to stand or kneel and pray with himself. But a penitent, believing heart only can pray to God through the great Mediator in an acceptable manner. Is there not reason to fear that there is an amazing sum of iniquity committed under the name of prayer. O Lord, how is thy blessed name profaned by unmeaning hypocritical pretences to call upon it. What wonders will the day of judgment unfold to the astonished millions, who will then be assembled! The thoughts of all hearts will be revealed. The abominations of hypocrites will be laid open to view. And the sincerity of the true believer will be made known, and receive the approbation of the Judge. Doubtless great will be the disappointment of self-deceived souls, great the confusion of high sounding, hollowhearted Pharisees; and great the joy of the humble contrite heart. O gracious Lord, let me no longer pray *with myself*, but do thou teach me by thy Spirit to pray in spirit and in truth to Thee who dost verily hear prayer. O give me a little of the spirit of Christ, that I may be heartily engaged in thy service, and may worship thee ac-

ceptably through Him who said " whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, believing, ye shall receive." Precious promise to the humble, believing soul. O seal it to my heart, and make me thine, entirely thine.'

September 19th, 1812.

"What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Apply this, O my soul, to thyself. What more could have been done for thee, than has been done. O think of the infinitude of blessings, which have been continually bestowed upon thee; of health, of peace and plenty, of the blessed gospel; of innumerable spiritual privileges, opportunities for advancing in the knowledge of God and divine things. With some little sense of these unmerited favours well may I enquire, what more could have been done, that has not been done for me.— Wherefore, when the Lord looked for fruit, has he found wild fruit? I fear that I have only produced "the fruits of the flesh," "the wine of Sodom, and the clusters of Gomorrah." My goodness has been as the morning cloud and early dew which soon passeth away. Lord I am vile. I abhor myself. When the Lord has looked for supreme love, he has beheld attachment to creatures, to self, to eve-

ry vanity, rather than to him. When he has looked for steady zeal in his service, he has beheld alternate warmth of natural affection, and languid supineness. When he has looked for humility, he has seen me full of pride. When he has sought for holy self-denial, he has found self-gratification and self-seeking. When he has looked for a diligent advancement in holiness, he has seen me wickedly backsliding. Lord, I would continually abhor myself. I would desire to take a low place in the valley of contrition, acknowledging that my iniquities are infinitely hateful. O give me faith to apply immediately to the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. O cleanse me, sanctify me, purify every faculty of my soul; make me holy like thyself, fitted for thy service in thine earthly courts, and for the palace of thy glory above. If I am a branch of the True Vine, purge me that I may bring forth fruit unto holiness, to the glory of God. If I am a hypocrite, O undeceive me, suffer me not to live in this dangerous state, but flee immediately, while there is an accepted time and day of salvation. I would now, upon a retrospect of my past life, set my seal to this truth, that the Lord is good to the evil and unthankful. My soul is a living witness, and I would record it for the glory of God, and the humiliation of my proud heart. Let my future state be what it

may, I am, and shall forever be, under infinite obligation to love and serve God; not only for his own essential; incommunicable glory, but for his goodness to me, the most unworthy of his people.'

October 25th, 1812.

' The discourse this morning from these words, "Pardon thy servant in this thing," has condemned me exceedingly. In very many things I have neglected duty, and done those things which I ought not, and the language of my conduct has been, "pardon me in this thing." O how abominably ungrateful for those, who have a hope in Christ, to indulge in the least sin, to make excuses for the smallest neglect of duty. Does it not furnish alarming evidence of a deceived state? O Lord, search Jerusalem as with candles. Search out every vain pretence, every false hope, every secret abomination, whereby we defile our own souls, and dishonour thine infinite holiness. O cleanse thou us from secret faults, sanctify us from hidden abominations, make us pure in thy sight, being arrayed with the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, and having the inward adorning of the graces of the Holy Spirit. "Then shall we not be ashamed when we have respect unto all thy commandments."

Miss Morton for several years continued her Diary, but with occasional interruptions. During the years 1809 and 1810 she recorded her exercises and reflexions upon providential events with more particularity than at any subsequent period. When she resided at Freetown, and when she enjoyed most leisure for writing, and for reflection, we find her Diary most copious and interesting.— Some extracts from it, containing her daily reflexions, will doubtless gratify her christian friends. It will be recollectcd, that while she resided at Freetown, she was not favored with the opportunity of attending the stated worship of God.

‘Lord’s Day. Spent this day principally in reading the scripture—writing some.—Being destitute of a stated meeting, we are deprived of the inestimable privilege of hearing the word of truth dispensed. May we suitably improve this and all other dispensations of Providence. May we search our hearts, and see our sins, which are the cause of the privation of our mercies.—May my understanding be enlightened to see the excellences of gospel truths; the harmony and connexion of the word of God. May the Holy Spirit touchsafe to be my instructor,—open and seal the promises to my soul, and cleanse my heart from all sin.

Monday. Met with a trial to-day, which was entirely unexpected, and it almost overwhelmed me. But blessed be God for trials as well as for mercies. Trials serve, if sanctified to my soul, to show me more and more the depravity of my heart, to wean me from myself and the world, and lead me nearer to God. May God grant that all dispensations of Providence may have that good effect, being set home upon my heart by sovereign grace. While I can feel a freedom to go to God, and pour out my supplications, and desires with a child-like confidence, I can welcome all afflictions. Let me be more humble, more weaned from self.

Tuesday. Passed the day without any uncommon occurrence—felt not so lively in religion as I could wish; but felt something affected I trust with the grace of God.

Thursday. Have felt something of a desire for God to-day,—a desire to love him more—to enjoy more of his presence. Had a sweet season of prayer this morning. But O how faint and feeble are my best desires. When I reflect on my stupidity and coldness, I am sometimes astonished that I have the least gleam of hope; but yet in my darkest hours I cannot entirely give it up.

Lord's Day. Spent the day in something

of a dull frame of mind ; but enjoyed some solemn views of the importance of religion. Wrote a letter to a friend, who has discovered some attention to eternal realities in time past ; though the impression appears now nearly worn off. May God bless means to bring her to himself. Last evening finished a letter to the dear christian friend who visited me some time since. O that I could write solely for the glory of God without any mixture of selfishness. May the great Head of the Church soon favor me with an opportunity to wait on him in his house of prayer.

Monday. Had a large company of relations to visit us to-day from a distance. Not one among them, that I know of, who professes to have any religion. How different would it be to have a number of God's people to visit us, with whom we might take sweet counsel together. I am so apt to go astray and join in sinful mirth, that such company, though I esteem them my friends, tends greatly to entangle me in the foolish vanities of the world. When will my wayward heart learn to be "fixed, trusting in the Lord." I have every moment need of fresh supplies of grace to keep me in the right way.

Tuesday. Our friends left us to-day. When we meet again, may it be in the love of Jesus,

Blessed be God for all mercies, for health, strength, friends, and all the comforts of this life; and above all for the precious gift of his Son, by whom all blessings, both temporal and spiritual are purchased. May we have grace to improve all to his glory.

Thursday. Had the company of a christian friend to-day; one whom I have not seen for some time. Blessed be God, that I can see my young friends sometimes engaged in his service. May our affections be more placed on the great fountain of all goodness.

Friday. Wrote a letter to-day to a friend, with whom I have been corresponding on religious subjects. I thought I had some regard to the glory of God in this correspondence. But alas, I fear I have more pride than any thing else. I have discovered in myself so much pride this day, that I am ashamed to look at any one. Pride is a spirit abhorred of God, and yet how much of it remains in my heart. O that God would humble me, and may the Holy Spirit apply the blood of Christ to my polluted soul, that it may be cleansed from all its hateful maladies, that it may be fitted to honor and glorify God.

Saturday. Passed the day rather gloomily, because of my sins. Was sent for to pass the night with my sick friends.—Had some pro-

fitable conversation with a christian friend;—but how cold, how dull my ungrateful heart.

Lord's Day. Was very low in the fore-part of the day; but felt some reviving comfort in the perusal of Doddridge's Rise and Progress. Read the Bible, and felt some desires to understand and taste its sacred truths. 'The sin of morning sloth robs me of many precious hours, in which God's faithful children are ascribing praise and thanksgiving to him. I have often made weak resolutions to amend in that; but I fear I have tried to do it in my own strength. May God now assist me and in every deed enable me to break off that sin, by repentance and reformation, and to him shall be all the glory.'

In the above extract we have a specimen of the Diary, as it was written from day to day. It was begun soon after she was induced to consecrate herself to God in Christ Jesus, and to hope in his grace. It was commenced with the ardor of one recently "born of the Spirit;" it shows that she was habitually attentive to her own impressions and exercises; and watchful over her own heart. She was most diligent in writing memoirs of herself, when least occupied by worldly cares; but when she was engaged in a school at New Bedford, and during the subse-

quent years of her life, she only noted in her Diary uncommon Providences, or discontinued it altogether. The ardor with which she began her Diary appears in some measure to have abated ; or perhaps she found it inconsistent with her other engagements, as she advanced in life, to pursue her original design.

We here commence her correspondence with her intimate friends. Her letters are confined almost exclusively to religious subjects. They are generally addressed to young ladies, or to those of her own age, who were either professedly pious, or fond of serious subjects. The following was addressed to one who was engaged as well as herself in the instruction of youth.

Freetown, —
To Miss L. W.

There is one concern my dear friend, of primary importance to be attended to immediately ; lest by neglect we should lose our souls forever. I hope we have, at least, some faint desires to secure this one thing needful, now in the days of youth, while we have little of worldly cares to insnare and vex us. If these are our desires, we shall not certainly think it amiss to make religion the subject of our letters ; and the grace of God may enable us to enlighten and edify each other.—We

see often that weak means are used to accomplish important purposes ; that we may realize that the sufficiency and power is all of God, and that he is able to bring light out of darkness.

Excuse my freedom, my dear friend, if I express my fears that your mind is not so much engaged in this great enquiry as it has formerly been. If that be the melancholy case, let me ask your conscience, as in the sight of God, how you will justify such remissness. While you and I are delaying the work of repentance, what if God should cut the thread of life ? What plea could we offer at his dread tribunal ? Would our hands be strong, or our hearts endure ? If we would escape the dreadful doom of the ungodly, let us immediately humble ourselves before God.

You will not, my dear friend, be offended at such plainness. Our contract of friendship requires plainness and sincerity ; and in a case of such moment would not unfaithfulness bring a high degree of guilt ? In this at least, I can sincerely say, I do as I wish to be done by. What a new endearment it would give to my present attachment to you, if you would use greater freedom in reproving me, in reminding me of my sins, which may, if persisted in, draw down the vengeance of God. I entreat you, as my most intimate

friend, to examine what you know of my conduct, and compare it with the rule of duty. I am sensible I must shrink into nothing on such a comparison, yet I desire it, as I may thereby be brought to see and to abhor many sins, which had before concealed themselves under the thick veil of self-love. I might thereby learn to view myself in a juster light, and might fly to Christ with more earnestness to be washed and cleansed, and made white in his purifying blood. I might more feelingly honor God, who gives to so vile a sinner a hope of pardon and eternal life.

I enjoyed great comfort and satisfaction in your sister's conversation—my soul felt an endearing union.—I cannot but hope she has “passed from death unto life,” and will be enabled to persevere and honour God by her life and conversation. I think her husband is an sincere enquirer, if he has not actually found the “pearl of great price.” I sincerely hope that he and all their children may be brought to the knowledge and acknowledgement of the “truth as it is in Jesus.” I yet hope and pray that there may be an out-pouring of the Spirit in that place, and that multitudes may be thronging the gates of Zion.

I hope, if it be possible, you will visit me before my school commences. I feel a strong desire to see you, and would gladly visit you if it were convenient. Remember me to all

enquiring friends and let us hear from you soon, if we cannot see you.

Your affectionate but unworthy

M. M.

New Bedford, —

To Miss L. W.

My dear L—— complains of my silence, and truly she has some reason; but the care of a school of about fifty may be some apology. I have indeed an assistant in my employment, but the care falls principally on myself. But this is not my rest. If my hopes of happiness beyond this world should prove delusive in that awful hour, which will usher my soul into eternity, I must be wretched beyond description; but I can assure you that I now enjoy moments of happiness in reflecting on the glories of eternal realities, which are more than a counterpoise for all the trials, through which I am called to pass. And though my trials are many, yet I think I have abundantly more reason to rejoice than to despond. Almost every day brings glad tidings to my ears of the conversion of souls. Zion, in many parts of our land, and in distant lands, rejoices, and her converts multiply like drops of the morning dew. Then let all, who love her gates, rejoice that they are building, and that her dust is precious. "Let

mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; for this God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death." And is the God of Israel indeed our God? No enquiry can be made to perishing sinners which is more solemnly interesting. My dear 'sister,' I hope he is your reconciled Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ. If so, nothing in heaven, earth, or hell can harm you. But if God is not our friend, if we are not believers in Jesus, the whole creation is in arms against such rebels and despisers of God, waiting only for permission from Him against whom we are rebelling to execute his vengeance. The antediluvians were not in more danger, when Noah was preparing to enter the Ark, than we are now, and we have equal need of fleeing to the Ark of safety. Let us bless God for his matchless love in providing such a glorious Surety, Advocate, and Friend to perishing sinners, which may with the greatest propriety be termed an Ark of safety.—Let us arise and flee, lest we be overtaken by the storms of divine vengeance; even while we linger, perhaps we are on the very threshold of eternity.

In our situation, my dear L—— what a

solemn responsibility devolves upon us. The care of so many precious youths—of their souls in a great measure as well as their intellectual faculties. From us they may receive impressions, which may be connected with eternal consequences. If they, as they no doubt do, critically observe our conduct, they will doubtless observe what appears to us of most importance ; whether it be the concerns of the body, for this short life, united with a predominant inclination to prepare for respectability and pleasure in this world, or a concern for the soul, united with supreme regard to the will of God, and a solemn sense of eternal realities. And as they observe us to be inclined, they will naturally be led. A sense of these solemn considerations has born with an almost unsupportable weight on my mind. How affecting the thought of meeting those children at the bar of God, whom my unfaithfulness has been the means of leading to a rejection of the salvation of the Gospel ! Methought they would rise in the day of Judgment, and say “You professed to be a disciple of Christ, but your attention to your scholars was confined to those things, which were calculated merely to make us useful and respectable in that vain world, which is now consuming by the brightness of Christ’s coming ; and you did not suitably warn us of our danger ; and those very accomplishments,

which you laboured to give us, by exciting the applause of the vain were the means of blinding our eyes to important truths, and now we must eternally perish through your neglect." Nor do I believe this a mere flight of imagination; for I fully believe that you and I shall meet our pupils at the great day of decision, when it will appear to the assembled world, in what manner we have discharged the important trust committed to us. O may we then appear in the righteousness of Christ; and have the joy to meet many of our charge among the jewels of the Most High; in answer to our prayers and admonitions. Eternal consequences hang on every hour of our lives, while we lie groveling in inactivity and stupor. May the gentle calls of Christ arouse us to diligence and engagedness in his blessed service. Through divine goodness I enjoy quite good health. O that I may also have a disposition to improve that and all other blessings to the glory of God. I wish much to see you and trust I shall when consistent with divine Providence. My remembrance to all friends. Your unworthy sister,

M. M.

Freetown, —
To Miss L. W.

My dear L——'s letter deserved an earlier answer, and a few weeks since a very favoura-

ble conveyance was anticipated ; but before it arrived the hand of sickness incapacitated me from performing the pleasing office. The complaint with which I was afflicted was a nervous fever ; but I have abundant cause of gratitude, that I was so lightly chastised ; and that all the means used for my recovery, even my journey home several days after the commencement of my illness, were blessed. In reviewing the providence of God in my sickness and recovery I find occasions of pious gratitude exceedingly multiplied. O that I had a heart to return to God according to benefits received ; but a sense of the hardness of my heart and of my exceeding barrenness affords matter for the deepest humiliation. I am learning, my dear L——, by little and little to feel the force of that text in Jeremiah. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ; who can know it?" I think I am in some measure sensible, that none but he, who searcheth the secrets of all hearts, can penetrate into the amazing depth of iniquity, which my treacherous heart conceals. How blind we are in a state of nature, unawakened to a sense of ourselves. We imagine ourselves whole ; and though our consciences accuse us of some sins, yet we have no idea that "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." But when the Spirit of God is commissioned to "convince us of sin,

of righteousness and of judgment," we then begin to perceive what kind of creatures we are. We feel that the "carnal mind is enmity against God." We find that we are involved in an unfathomable gulph of wretchedness and sin ; and, unless an almighty Savior has compassion on us, we must perish eternally. My beloved friend, the sands of our glass are rapidly, though silently, passing away, and hurrying us into eternity. I would hope that you consider more the solemn scenes which are just before us, than your unworthy friend. Surely they are worthy our most constant and solicitous attention ; and I presume, when we come into eternity and to the bar of God, we shall not regret taking too much pains to secure an interest in Christ. The great day of accounts will declare, that they only are truly wise, who live in time for eternity ; who "give all diligence to make their calling and election sure. I often fear that, in the day of eternal decision, I and many of my dear earthly friends, shall be separated from the enjoyment of God and from all good to have our part with hypocrites and unbelievers. The thought is awful ; but the doom would be just. O may we all be awakened and constrained to "flee to the strong hold as prisoners of hope."

The season past I have heard of the deaths of two of my young female acquaintances.

which exhibited the contrast between the lovers of the world and the lovers of Christ. One, though exercised with extreme bodily pain, was full of consolation. Reflecting on the sufferings of Christ, she said, hers were not to be named. To me and to all her friends, she sent her dying love and request, that we would secure an interest in Christ while in health, for a dying bed was a most unsuitable place to prepare for eternity. With a heart humbly submitting to the will of God, and with faith in the merits of a crucified Savior, she could leave an affectionate husband, her little infant, and the world in peace. May our last end be like hers. The other to whom I alluded was greatly awakened to see her sinful life, and the awful vengeance, which awaits the ungodly. She confessed the pride of her heart, which had fondly doated upon riches. Said she,—“ My father, your riches cannot save me from death, nor purchase me an interest in Christ, though they have lifted up my heart to despise the poor, when perhaps they were christians and possessed that which I would give worlds to purchase.” Such were her distressing reflexions on her death bed ; and I have never heard that she obtained a hope before the awful summons of her dissolution arrived. O that such solemn warnings may be sanctified to all who receive them.

Yours, M. M.

The following extract from a letter to Miss L. W. contains some interesting reflexions upon the day of judgment.

Our time on earth is short. What an incentive should this be to us, to "be up and doing while the day lasts ; lest the night come in which no man can work." "Time is short" and yet on this little moment hang eternal consequences. Let us live under an habitual sense of the reality of eternal concerns. Would it not serve to repress sinful mirth, inordinate desires, and dangerous passions, if we should reflect frequently and solemnly on the great day of final retribution, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, before assembled worlds ! God will bring into judgment every evil work, and every idle word. O what a multitude, beyond the reach of computation or the stretch of imagination,—of idle thoughts and words shall we, my dear 'sister,' have to answer for before the Judge and Maker of ten thousand worlds ! Where shall we be found amidst the conflagration of the spheres ? The scene is present to my thoughts, when the many millions of creatures, who have trod this earth, shall be called by the reanimating trumpet of the archangel to appear before their God and Judge. How glorious the appearance of him, who once hung on Calvary's mount, attended by ten thousand times ten thousand angels,

assembled to hear the just and impartial sentence of a God! Where then, oh where, will guilty souls retire from his wrath? Where then, O my soul, wilt thou appear? Will the great Judge receive thee and cover thee with a robe of his own righteousness, and pronounce on thee that blessed plaudit, "Come thou blessed of my Father?" The glory, the justice, the excellency of God will shine with inconceivable lustre on this all important day, and the ransomed of the Lord will sing hal-lujah forever and ever. "Come then, O our souls, meditate on that day, when all things in nature shall melt and decay." May our thoughts dwell on these solemn realities, for they are assuredly approaching; and another sun may not set before we are cut off by death. Let us humbly and heartily pray for repentance unto life. Let us come to God in our true characters, and beg for pardon and acceptance through the blood of the Lamb. Then, O animating belief, shall we be prepared "to meet Christ in the air." By faith in Christ shall we be enabled to join the triumphant song of Moses and the Lamb.

M. M.

New Bedford, —

To the same.

My dear L—— is not forgotten though she has been so long wondering at the silence of her friend.

Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all my days ; but alas, "what poor returns of love, hath my Creator found." I have the greatest cause of any one to be humble, and yet my heart is filled with pride. I have every motive, which can be offered to a rational being, to be engaged in the blessed cause of God ; yet I am cold and stupid, as though it were a matter of no consequence. I have the greatest reason for watchfulness, yet am never rightly engaged in it. My dear friend, it is impossible you should form an idea of my exceeding vileness ; and that such a sinner should be made to see it, and to hope in Christ, is surely a most convincing proof of the efficacy and power of God's grace. If we believe the scriptures of truth, we must be sensible that the christian life is a state of warfare. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." At some times I feel a comfortable hope, that I am what I have professed to be, a follower of the Lamb ; and feel such delight in the contemplation of divine things as no earthly objects ever afforded me. My heart seems to be enlarged and animated, and all things appear to speak the love of God. At other times the corruptions of my heart appear to be let loose, and form a cloud, almost an impenetrable one which hides these soul-refreshing objects from my view. But "by the

grace of God, I am what I am." And even in my darkest hours he does not suffer me to be tried beyond the strength, which he vouchsafes to grant. He never leaves me to myself entirely, I trust, but his patience is still exercised towards the most unworthy and ungrateful of all his servants.

But let not our trials discourage us from entering into the service. The Apostle calls it a "good warfare." And truly it is so. I would humbly desire to add my feeble testimony to the cloud of witnesses, with which we are compassed about, that God is good, holy, just, and glorious, beyond all possible comprehension; and that his service is delightful, notwithstanding the host of enemies the believer has to encounter. Though he may be pressed beyond measure, and suffer the loss of all earthly things, yet Christ is his righteousness, his strength, his joy, his "all in all." The everlasting God is his portion, an eternal heaven is his home.

When such blissful prospects are before us we should esteem it an unspeakable happiness, even if we realized no present joys, and if they were all in reversion. But this is not the case, I humbly conceive; for such refreshing joys are afforded even in this state of trial, as are sufficient to fill the heart at times with transport.

Your unworthy sister,
Mary Morton,

New Bedford, —

To the same.

I received your letter, my dear friend, the last evening with emotions of pleasure ; but the intelligence it contained was surprising indeed. But why should it be so ? We know we are every moment exposed to the shafts of death and that no living mortal has an assurance of future life for a day, an hour or even a moment. In the death of our young friend, we receive a loud call to " be also ready." "What day, what hour, but knocks at human hearts." God only knows, why our lives are spared and our friend called ; doubtless he has important ends to answer by this providence. O let us pray for grace to improve our lives, whether longer or shorter, to the glory of that all-perfect Being, who preserves us. Unless we love as he requires, and comply with the sweet invitations of the gospel, the longer we live, and the more warnings we receive, the more aggravated will be our condemnation. May the unmerited grace of God through Jesus Christ save us from this. It is this grace alone which saves one of the human race from destruction everlasting.

In the case of our friend, who is gone before us, we witness the free grace of God, who can save even at the eleventh hour. My heart was comforted by the intelligence of the happy state of her mind, and was, I hum-

bly trust, disposed to give glory to him who could show himself just and righteous in the salvation of sinners; and that it was his sovereign will to prepare my friend, tho' at the last part of life, to enjoy and praise his name to all eternity. It is better to hear that she died in Christ, than that she was living in sin and rebellion against God. I trust she is gone home to glory, and has met the faithful pastor, upon whose ministry she has attended the season past, in realms of everlasting day. But let us not make this example of mercy displayed on a dying bed, encourage us to put off a preparation for the important events of eternity a single moment. We may be called without the least warning to meet our God and Judge. Rather let such providences stimulate us to an immediate enquiry whether we are prepared to make the same important exchange.

As this is the day appointed for our annual Thanksgiving, a retrospective view of the year past naturally occurs to the mind. We are destitute of a meeting to-day—and of course I have much leisure for reflexion. May God direct my meditations, and enable me to keep this day as a day of thanksgiving to the Lord. What abundant reason have I to say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." Presuming on the kind indulgence of my friend,

I shall, in my letter, endeavour with a spirit of heart felt gratitude, to enumerate a few of the blessings of God to an unworthy worm the past year. May the Holy Spirit help me to remember and to acknowledge all my mercies. On our last annual Thanksgiving, how far was I from any sense of my relation to God, as an accountable being. I had grieved his Spirit, and returned to a state of security, after being in some measure made sensible of my need of an interest in Christ. I was full of vanity, stupidity, and hardness of heart. But God's mercy is infinite, therefore did he not cut me off. His sovereign grace, I trust, brought me nigh when I was afar off. And how has he born, with my stupidity, unbelief, and neglect of him, since that period? How often has his arm been revealed for my safety and deliverance, from the power of temptation, from fatal backslidings, and from open and gross sins; and, though the sins of my heart have been more in number than the hairs of my head, yet he has graciously upheld me, and has, I trust, in mercy "cast them behind his back." How many blessed seasons of comforting and instructive conversation with his dear children, have I enjoyed. How many of them have honoured me, a worthless sinner, with friendship and tender regard. How many precious admonitions and warnings have I received;

and I humbly trust thou hast, O God, sanctified them to my soul. My life and health have been preserved amidst contigions and mortal diseases: while one on my right hand and another on my left has fallen, thou hast upheld me. In temporal concerns how greatly have I been prospered, and O what poor returns! "Dear Lord, I give myself away, 'tis all that I can do."—O help me, gracious God, to say this with my whole heart, and to devote all my future life, whether it be longer or shorter, to the praise of thy blessed name; and prepare me to praise thee through an endless eternity. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefit."

Remember an unworthy friend,
Mary Morton.

—
New Bedford. —
To Miss L. W.

We are destitute of a preached word to-day; and of course I have leisure to write. May God enable me to spend to day in his fear and service—and whatever I do, may it be done with a single eye to his glory. On Friday evening last I suppose my young acquaintance in B. assembled for a ball in the usual place. I also was invited to attend a ball at F. the same evening. I desire to give thanks to God that I had no inclination to at-

tend; and that I felt in some imperfect measure, disposed to pity and pray for those, who have no idea of happiness in higher pursuits. Fully aware that I shall draw on myself the imputation of bigoted superstition by opposing the fashionable amusements of the day, I would wish to do it with caution and judgment, lest I should bring a reproach on that religion, which I hope I love and reverence. Neither would I do it without the fullest conviction of their impropriety;—I mean in those who profess a regard for God and his commands. For those who profess to follow Christ, to partake of the sinful amusements of the world, what is it less than saying by their conduct, whatever may be their words, that the pleasures of piety are not sufficient to satisfy them, but they must indulge themselves in sinful pleasures to make up the deficiency? Will not the enemies of the religion of Jesus at once make this conclusion? I know an argument often made use of in favor of professing christians joining in the amusements of the world, is, that “they, of all people have greatest reason to be cheerful.” I acknowledge that, and would contend for the peculiar causes of rejoicing, which the believer possesses; but would ask, are the pleasures of piety and the pleasures of sin exactly the same? Can the believer in Jesus take delight in the same objects, which are pursued by the

most hardened infidel? Does not this reduce the saint to a level with the sinner? If their joys and sorrows arise from the same sources, the difference between them surely cannot be very great. But does not the word of truth explicitly point out a wide difference? It points out with great clearness the peculiar joys and sorrows of the christian, and declares them to be not only different in degree but diametrically opposite in kind to those of the sinner. Pious joy is often mentioned in the scriptures, and characterized as being a "joy in God," "joy in the Holy Ghost." "Is any merry? let him sing Psalms." "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice."

But I need not dwell on this subject, for I believe my dear friend heartily assents to the truth I have been endeavoring to establish, and to her only my letter is directed. I should not, perhaps, have thought of this subject at this time, if it were not the case that some professors of religion in this place, practice attending balls, card-playing, and other fashionable amusements. It was mentioned to me as an argument for attending the ball, that such a young lady, a professor, was going. How is Christ wounded in the house of his professed friends?—What a stumbling block is then laid in the way of enquiring minds? It is to be feared that some immortal souls will stumble over the irregular and unscript-

tural walk of professors into eternal condemnation. What an argument should this be to those, who have named the name of Christ to depart from all iniquity ; " to walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise ;" and to be prayerful, and humble, and watchful, " that their light may shine before others ; that they, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven."

Are not my friends in the South of B. affected seriously by the Providence of God in taking one of their number ? " O that they would be wise, that they would consider their latter end." O that all would " come and taste that the Lord is gracious ;" that my young friends would flee sinful amusements, and would seek the Lord with full purpose of heart. Youth is the best time to begin to serve the Lord, and he has given precious promises to those who remember him in youth. In the early part of life the mind is less hardened by the bondage of Satan, and more susceptible of the warnings and calls of the Spirit. Let us not grieve away the Holy Spirit, but attend now to its influences, and submit ourselves to God, lest he fulfil that threatening, " my Spirit shall not always strive with man ;" and we be given over " to hardness of heart and a reprobate mind." The pleasures of piety are incalculable and inexpressible, but the carnal heart has no

more conception of them than a blind man has of colors. May God open our eyes to see and adore.

Mary Morton.

Upon perusing the following letter, and many others in this collection, we may recollect that humble general confessions are no conclusive proofs of extraordinary depravity; but only of great sensibility to that depravity, which is common to all mankind. The opinion we adopt of another's piety is sometimes exactly the reverse of that, which we hear a person himself express. Paul was eminent for personal piety as well as for spiritual gifts; yet he speaks of himself as less than the least of all saints. The young Ruler in the gospel said he had kept all the commandments of the Decalogue from his youth; yet he gave most sorrowful evidence of predominant selfishness, and love of the world after all; and refused to follow Christ the Savior of the world. He loved his treasure more than he loved his God.

It may be observed also that this letter was written at a time of increasing attention to religion; precisely at such a time as would lead a sincere christian to reproach himself most severely for languor in sacred duties.

New Bedford, — 1809.
To Mrs. N. N.

The letter of my beloved friend reached my hands yesterday morning—and I have reason to hope it will be blessed as a means of good to my soul. I cannot thank you as enough for your kindness in so often remembering me. I am unworthy of it, utterly unworthy.

It is not necessary that I should tell you that my heart is not engaged in religion as it ought to be. You will see it from my writing; for out of the abundance of the heart language flows. To grieve the people of God, to grieve the Holy Spirit, to open afresh the wounds of our suffering Redeemer, to wound him in the house of his professed friends,—how sinful—how ungreatful.—But I am that very sinner. Of all persons I have the hardest, most stupid, most unbelieving heart. How just would it be in God to give me up and say of me as of Ephraim of old, “he is joined to idols let him alone.” My christian friends say I must not speak this language. I know I am sinful in feeling thus; but when I am so full of darkness, how can I speak of light and peace? I believe I am the most hardened creature that ever lived. My soul is in bitterness on account of my stupidity and iniquity. It pained me to find you have

such fears respecting our friend Mrs. G——; but alas, you may justly have such fears of me. How melancholy to think that we should thus cast a reproach on the cause of the blessed God. But do not let it give you too much pain; for God will be glorified in all things. His justice will shine conspicuously in the punishment of the hypocrite. It is a blessed thing that hypocrites and unbelievers will never grieve the children of God after their removal to the blessed mansions. The church shall be complete; none that are given to Christ shall ever perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand. If you can feel a freedom to lay my case before the throne of grace;—but I am entirely unworthy. O that I may be prepared to glorify God by living devoted to his cause and interest. Now at this interesting season when we hope God is about to make a display of his power here, how important that every one who has professed friendship to his name should step boldly forward to the help of the Lord against the mighty. O that I may have faith given me to rise above this weight of sin and unbelief.—Faith in the Lord Jesus can remove mountains. Mountains of darkness which I cannot express seem to press me down from duty—from every thing I ought to feel and to do. We shall have your prayers that the work of the Lord

may prosper here—that Zion's gates may be crowded with converts, that the young and the middle aged and the aged may be made trophies of sovereign grace, electing love.

Your unworthy sister,
Mary Morton.

The following observations upon dress, contained in a letter to Miss B. M. were not the mere sportive effusions of one, who took pleasure in reading her own compositions, or who fed her vanity with the thought, that others would read them also. It appears with her to have been a settled principle in this respect not to be conformed to the world.—Neatness and economy in this particular accorded with the purity of her mind, and with her sincere desire to relieve the wants of the poor, both at home and abroad.

August 8th —
To Miss B. M.

In replying to your query, my dear sister, I fear I shall use less circumspection than I ought. My mind is so entirely decided on this point, that I sometimes feel a wish to have all view the subject in the same light that I do. The Apostolic direction is exceedingly plain and forcible. “Not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.”

Did we all delight only in the ornaments, which the Holy Spirit, by this Apostle has recommended, how much more should we appear like the daughters of Zion and the disciples of him, whose kingdom is not of this world ; and what an immense saving might be made for the benefits of the destitute heathen. The price of one lace veil ; or other expensive superfluity, might be sufficient under Providence to save the souls of many heathen from eternal despair. How shall christian females answer it to God in the day of "dread decision," how can we now answer it to our own consciences, if we prefer the empty decorations of fashion to the everlasting interests of immortal souls ? I am not conscious of feeling the least degree of hardness against any dear sister, who feels it right to spend much in ornamental dress, &c. But I sometimes confess to my most intimate friends that it grieves me. May it not with great propriety be said, "Why is this waste?" These clayey bodies, now so delicately attired, will soon need no other ornament than a shroud and coffin. "The worm shall feed sweetly on them and the dust shall cover them." They will not indeed be then the worse for former splendid coverings ; but the souls of those who might have been saved by the expense, where will they be? Alas, beyond the reach of salvation, in the world of eternal despair.

M. M.

Whether the following letter was a real dream, or written in that form merely for the sake of attracting the attention of a young person, the admonition it contains is equally worthy of regard. It is not a visionary notion that all mankind by nature are dead in trespasses and sins; but it requires all the ingenuity of address, and something more than the charms of fiction to make the point of reproach contained in this letter acceptable. How can one who has a thousand times perhaps been called a "sweet little cherub," receive without offence the intimation, that in the eyes of infinite purity she is but a fallen spirit?

New Bedford, —— 1810.

To Miss E. B.

My dear Emily will be surprised to receive this letter, and her mind will doubtless be led to enquire why I should write when I may have daily opportunities of personal conversation. Once I have called with a design of conversing on the subject which now engages my pen, but your absence prevented; and I have since thought a more lasting impression might be made by this method of communicating the important subject which has long engaged my mind. My neglect for so long a time has occasioned many painful reflections; and as I regard the welfare of your soul, I will no longer remain silent.

The importance of the eternal interests of the soul can never be duly estimated by such blind creatures as we are, till the curtain of eternity is drawn aside, and we enter the invisible world. But observation teaches us that there are many among the thoughtless children of men, to whom contemplation on these solemn events is familiar and pleasing. Yes, blessed be the name of the Most High, that he does not allow all the fallen race of Adam to continue in the broad road, which leadeth to death, but prevents them from "sealing their own destruction sure," and calls them by his efficacious grace to the knowledge of himself.

At the present day we hear of a great number who are brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and whose feet are established on the Rock of ages, and their mouths filled with a new song even praises to God. We not only hear of these things, but our eyes have seen in months past, a display of the power of God in the hearts of our friends and acquaintances, of our own age and standing. And have we not also felt a conviction in our own souls, that unless we were born again into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, our soul, would inevitably sink into everlasting destruction. My dear young friend has in times past appeared concerned for her soul; and he who knows all hearts,

knows perfectly what your state now is ; whether you have believed in Jesus, and are in a state of justification, preparing for heaven ; or whether you still remain, notwithstanding all your past concern, in a state of unbelief and consequent condemnation ; for " he that believeth not is condemned already," and " the wrath of God abideth on him."

Some time since I had a dream concerning my dear Emily, which to me appeared remarkable ; and though I do not generally give heed to sleeping thoughts, yet this was so strongly and clearly impressed on my mind, and the duty of mentioning it to you, appeared so plainly that I cannot willingly defer it any longer. Though it took place some time since, it is still fresh in memory, and O that the blessed Spirit, who alone can effectually impress the mind may powerfully affect your heart and mine with the important instruction it contains. While in sleep my mind was thus led.—You were dead and the time of your funeral arrived ; and when the procession was formed to follow your corpse to the grave, it was observed that professors of religion should form the procession, and I then followed others. Contrary to the usual custom the coffin was not opened for the last view of your remains, until we had gone a short distance, when we went into a house to take a last leave of our departed

friend. The corpse appeared ghastly; the print of death was stamped in frightful characters; but as I looked I observed that you opened one eye. Astonished, I gave notice to those who stood around, and left the room; but the noise of the groans occasioned by returning life were distinctly heard and were distressing indeed. In a few moments you were so far reanimated as to speak. I heard those around you say that I was the means of saving you from being buried alive, as no one saw any appearance of life until I mentioned it. You immediately requested them to call me; and when I approached, you were sitting still in your coffin. Your countenance appeared flushed with all its native bloom. The expressions of gratitude in your countenance and words cannot be described. With the utmost affection you threw your arms around my neck and kissed me; while I was so overcome that I could say nothing but this, "You must give God all the glory, it belongs not to me." The scene is present to my imagination, but my dear friend, I have not communicated it to frighten you or fill your mind with any needless apprehensions concerning the hour of death; but will ask leave to add the thoughts, which crowded into my mind immediately after waking from this solemn scene.

You, as all are by nature, was dead in tres-

passes and sins, entirely destitute of any spiritual life ; you had appeared at times, to be anxious for the welfare of your soul. Perhaps one eye, to preserve the allusion, had been opened to view your danger ; but as yet, unless you had received Jesus by faith, you had not breathed the air of spiritual life. O that God would raise you to life, even life everlasting, and fill your heart with his love ; then indeed to him would be all the glory ascribed by the angels in heaven and the saints on earth. It may appear to you a visionary thing and the mention of it simplicity, yet the events of eternity are solemn realities ; and we shall soon know them to be so. If I know my heart, its desires are that you may taste the joys of early religion, and now in the bloom of life devote yourself unreservedly to the service of that God whose name is Love.

I would add, my beloved girl, that a sincere regard for your soul's best interest has led me to write thus. We must meet at the bar of God, and give an account how we give and receive advice. May God grant that we may meet in peace, being clothed in the righteousness of Jesus that our souls be not found naked. O let us now attend to these things, while we have health and time ; a dying bed may be too late. "O come to Jesus, sinners all." Your sincerely affectionate friend,

Mary Morton.

The following observations, extracted from one of her letters to an intimate friend, discover at least a desire to rise superior to sectarian prejudices, and to cultivate love to all, who appear in the judgment of charity to bear the image of Christ:

Freetown, — 1810.

To Miss H. P.

After you left me on Friday morning, Mr. H. told me he thought he "should live to see me become a Baptist." The charge was an unexpected one, but I trust it has had a good effect upon me in two respects. First, it makes me better acquainted with my own heart. I thought I had nearly conquered the prejudices, which I have too much indulged against that persuasion. But I find they were only laid asleep, not exterminated. O that such discoveries of the wickedness of my heart might humble me in the very dust before God, and lead me to a fresh application to Christ for pardoning, sanctifying, and purifying grace. Certainly nothing less than the blood of the Son of God can be sufficiently powerful to cleanse such a sink of iniquity as is within my heart. In the second place, the observation led me to enquire into my principles to see whether I am a Baptist now, or whether I am in the path which leads thither.

er; and also to make a new research into the grounds of difference between our denomination and theirs. Unless I am deceived, I do not find myself disposed to favor them in disputed points; for I now think, whatever I may hereafter be led to believe, that the evidence of scripture is on the side, on which I have professed myself to be. I hope we shall be kept from all bitterness and evil speaking against those who differ. As we view them to be in an error, let us in meekness and love endeavour to convince them; and if that be impracticable, let us by no means allow any hardness toward them; but endeavour to keep our eye fixed on that glorious day, when the "watchmen shall see eye to eye." The will of Christ is that christians should be one. Let us therefore carefully avoid every thing tending to interrupt the unity of christians. Were our hearts now moulded into the spirit and temper of the gospel, we should I think, find less occasion of division and strife.

M. M.

This letter and the two next following appear to have been written to one who was engaged as well as herself in the instruction of youth. Miss Morton adopts the appellation, 'Sister,' in allusion perhaps to their common employment, and to their common interest in the grace of the gospel.

Middleborough, — 1811.
To Miss L. T.

My dear Sister,

We have some time since entered into a solemn covenant to serve God, to be for him and for none else. We professed to receive Christ as our king and our Savior; and engaged that he should have our hearts and all our services. Whatever is implied in a public renunciation of the world, and in a profession of the religion of Jesus, we are under solemn obligations to perform. After a strict and impartial enquiry into our conduct and motives, will our hearts acquit us or condemn? "If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things." If we have forsaken the living God, and are worshipping idols, we cannot expect to escape the vengeance of him, who will not "give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images." I am sensible that I am sunk into a state of awful stupidity, which will increase like an overwhelming flood, unless that sovereign mercy, which I so much neglect, should speedily interpose. A few observations, which passed between us yesterday, just before we entered the house of God have led me to think more on this subject, and pressed it with more weight on my feelings. Faithful dealing with a backsliding

deceitful heart, may be very painful ; but it is no less necessary and profitable. If we find ourselves depressed, and the power of godliness declining in our hearts, what must we do as a hopeful means of being restored to the path of duty, and the enjoyment of the divine life ? To neglect self-examination through a fear of discovering our case to be very alarming would only make it worse, and we should fall by more rapid declension. Would it not be more safe immediately to enter into a thorough scrutiny of our hearts, to endeavor to find the lengths we have gone in the by-paths of the enemy ; to know the worst of our state, and the black ingratitude of our conduct ; to pray earnestly that God would restore our wandering feet, and lead us in the way everlasting. There is no hope for us while we continue to wander, and there is a hope if we return that the grace of him, who pardoned a backsliding David and a denying Peter, may be extended to us also. In the messages sent by the prophets to ancient Israel, I think there is some encouragement for poor repenting backsliders. In the 1st of Isaiah, after an enumeration of abominable sins, there is added this blessed encouragement, "Come and let us reason together, saith the Lord ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Can we wish for greater condescension than this? Can we ever sufficiently adore the unfathomable compassion and grace of God? Never in this world. Eternity will be employed by the redeemed in admiring and praising the great plan of salvation. May the glorious Mediator who is exalted a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins, work in our hearts by his spirit to produce unfeigned contrition. May he draw us with the cords of love, cleanse our souls from every idol, and give us that supreme love to his blessed character and cause, which shall be stronger than death, and shall influence us to live holy, and strive daily to honor him in all things. His compassion is infinite, and his word gives us encouragement to repent and return. Dear sister, let us believe his assertions and immediately return, —if possible with the feelings of the poor prodigal—for we have indeed sinned against heaven and in his sight and are no more worthy to be called children; the meanest place among his hired servants would be infinitely beyond our deserts. What have we found in the service of king Immanuel, which should so dishearten us, as we have both frequently lamented to be the case? Do we not by our sloth awfully dishonor his cause, by giving too much reason to beholders to think we esteem his service a weariness and bondage.

May we be made sufficiently humble to return with broken hearts, be restored to his favor, and yet be made instrumental of some good in the blessed cause, which we have hitherto too much neglected. I have nearly covered my paper without mentioning the interesting charge in which you will soon be engaged. Its importance is incalculable, and my heart's desire is that you and I, and all engaged in it, may feel its weight and be directed by infinite wisdom, in what manner to discharge its duties to the benefit of the rising generation. In our anticipated correspondence an interchange of ideas on that subject may be made useful to us both. Present my affectionate regards to your parents and sisters, and to your worthy friend and employer. That divine grace may be your safeguard and support in your expected journey and important undertaking, is the sincere wish of your unworthy friend,

Mary Morton.

Middleborough, — 1811.

To Miss L. T.

Dear L—,

Does not daily experience teach us that this world is not a place of rest? Many cares, perplexities, and disappointments must be

experienced even in the most prosperous circumstances. And undoubtedly there is a display of divine benevolence, no less apparent in adverse, than in favorable events. Since the heart is naturally inordinately attached to the world, and since even christians are easily enticed from the path of duty by its dazzling allurements, we can easily discover the necessity of something to show us what the world really is. God is supremely good in all his ways ; no less so in afflictions and crosses, than in the bounties of his providence. Indeed I think the tenor of scripture leads us to this conclusion, that adversity is more favorable to a life of holiness, than its opposite ; and we find that some of the most eminent ancient saints were “ destitute, afflicted, tormented.” And what is the world with all its applause and magnificence, when put in competition with the favor of him, who created, upholds, and governs it ? To a soul truly sensible of eternal realities, I think, it appears as “ vanity of vanities, and less than vanity.” I presume you have passed through some peculiarly trying scenes, since you left home, if what I have heard be true, that our friend Mr. B. no longer has the government of the Academy. I have felt for you, for him, and for the interest of the school, and the rising generation. But we may safely trust, that all these things shall be overruled for

good, though our beclouded minds and unbelieving hearts may be ready to exclaim, "all these things are against us." Mr. B. has now an opportunity of exercising the precious grace of forbearance and forgiveness of injuries. I hope and trust he is enabled closely to imitate the example of his blessed master, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; but endured great contradiction of sinners against himself ; and left for his disciples this heavenly precept ; "Love your enemies ; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." It may be that these very trying events, by calling into exercise the principles of the gospel, and discovering the nature of that religion, whose doctrines are so violently controverted, may be used as a means of convincing many an unbeliever. May all, who are called to the trial, experience special support from the blessed Comforter. I hope to hear from you soon, and to be informed, not only of the events which have transpired, but of the exercises and supports of your own mind.

We, who have taken upon ourselves to instruct others, are surely in a station of great responsibility. To perform our various duties we need the constant exercise of grace, and the teachings of the divine spirit, without which we cannot do right. I am in some

measure sensible of my own deficiencies, though not suitably humbled for them. I know that I am an unfaithful, unholy creature; but the blackness and aggravated circumstances of my guilt are too much hidden from my eyes by the thick veil of stupidity. When reflecting on the present method of female education, I cannot feel entirely satisfied that we are right. But it is so hard to combat fixed prejudices, that I do not generally express my ideas, except to those who coincide with me in opinion. Could we have a just sense of the infinite value of time, should we not sedulously avoid, in a system of instruction, an attention to accomplishments merely ornamental? Is there not reason to fear some danger from them in a moral point of view? Do they not lead to vanity and lightness of mind, and do they not in some measure disqualify for the sober duties of life? I have thought it would be desirable to confine our attention to those pursuits, which would qualify for usefulness in the christian character, should it ever please God in sovereign mercy to call our pupils into his service. The mental faculties surely deserve more attention, than is generally bestowed. It is sometimes the case that the graces, which are merely personal, are assiduously cultivated, while the mind is suffered to remain entirely uncultivated, or at least superficially

informed. The female mind is naturally vain enough; and surely the force of education should not be employed to increase the evil, but to counteract it. To inspire just and rational habits of thinking, to give sobriety and energy to the mind, to enlarge and regulate the understanding, appears to me a more important object, than to encourage a fondness for the empty applause of the gay by a graceful exterior. My respects to our worthy friend Mr. B.

Your unworthy friend,
Mary Morton.

—
Freetown, — 1812.

To Miss L. T.

My dear Sister,

An attempt to rescue our correspondence from the shade of oblivion will, I trust, be pardoned by the kind indulgence of friendship. The improbability of an opportunity for personal conversation, unless you should visit me, which would indeed be highly gratifying, induces me to use the pen as a substitute. I have heard, and rejoice to hear it, that your pastor is unusually quickened in the discharge of his ministerial functions, and that christians are more engaged in prayer. Are not these encouraging symptoms of a display of divine grace in the conversion of

sinners? I trust they are, and can but hope that the precious dew of divine influence, which is distilling so copiously, will be extended to you also. Those who love Zion, and prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy, are doubtless earnestly praying for such a blessed event. Your hearts, I hope and trust, are going forth to the good Shepherd, that he would come unto you and gather in his chosen sheep, who now may be wandering over hills of darkness and unregeneracy; pleading with him, that he would come this way and make glorious displays of his power and love. But if you feel any thing of the coldness and languor, with which I am almost overwhelmed, you must at some times exclaim, "Why, O why, am I not more devoted to him who bled and died on the cross for the redemption of my soul, and for the innumerable multitude of his chosen people?" Why am I so earthly and sensual as to prefer the unsatisfying vanities of earth to the substantial blessings of the new and divine life?" We are under solemn obligations to live to the glory of God.—Did we enter into engagements, and are we now depending on our own strength for the performance? This may be the reason of our unprofitableness. Surely if we depend on Christ for strength, as well as righteousness, we shall not be disappointed of his aid; he will enable us to do those things which he will own and bless.

I have thought much on a subject which I shall in perfect confidence communicate to you; praying that if it would be, as I seriously believe it would, a powerful means under the divine blessing of quickening the soul in the divine life, and giving exercise to the graces of the christian character, that it may be accomplished in the Lord's own time and way. In your society where many live so remote from meeting as to make it very inconvenient for them to return home during the interval of divine worship, there is much time unprofitably, not to say foolishly, spent among the younger professors. I speak of it from experience, and confess with shame my own guilt in this respect. The serious impressions made upon the mind by the labors of our spiritual instructor, instead of being cherished and matured, are too often obliterated, and the mind is unfitted for the solemn devotions of the afternoon. I think I can for myself trace the unprofitableness of many Sabbaths to this source. We profess to call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and to honor him not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasures, nor speaking our own words. If we love the Lord Jesus, surely this day, which expressly commemorates his resurrection, will be precious to us as a memorial of him, whom our souls love. Every means then which prom-

ises by a divine blessing to assist us to sanctify the Sabbath, and promote the power of godliness in our hearts, should be sought out and embraced with grateful pleasure. Would it not be practicable and desirable, my dear sisters, for the younger sisters in your Church to meet privately, on Lord's day noons, for religious exercises? Might there be found accommodation in some place not far from the house of worship? I think there might; and I trust my friends would experience a blessing in the enjoyment of his presence, who has promised it to two or three gathered together in his name. Should you be enabled to form the resolution and go in the strength of the Lord, you would experience divine teaching and enlargement of soul. Free conversation on scripture, or on the discourse of the morning, or on the state of religion in your souls, and mutual prayer, would I think tend unspeakably to produce that unity of spirit and cordial christian fellowship, which ought assiduously to be cultivated. It would expose us to many things crossing to our natural feelings; but we know the language of scripture, which commands us to take our cross daily and follow Christ. Your hearts are, I doubt not, oftentimes affected with the view of so many of your young friends, who give decisive evidence of being strangers and enemies to Christ; and your secret places of re-

tirement witness the fervor of your supplications to the God of all grace, that he would awaken them, and bring them to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Would it not have a blessed effect, at least on your own minds, if you who profess to seek a better portion than the honors and pleasures of this world, should unite in secret supplication for them, at the time when we have reason to fear they are profaning the Sabbath, disregarding the holiness of this day of the Lord, by vain and unsuitable conversation in their social parties ? Who can tell but God would visit them in mercy, in answer to your prayers ? Should it please him in sovereign mercy to do it, what must be the joyful feelings of your souls ? But if this be not granted, it would afford a comfortable reflexion on the bed of death, that you have humbly labored for their good, and have earnestly endeavored that your example should not hinder them from embracing the gospel you profess. Would it not be a powerful means of enabling you to live in such a manner as to convince them that you have been with Jesus, and partake of his spirit?

Sensible in a small measure of my own awful deficiency in every gospel duty, and in some degree touched with pity for the perishing condition of our dear young friends in M. I feel very desirous that others, who are cal-

led into the gospel vineyard, may be zealously engaged in good works, though I am but a barren branch. My mind has been dwelling for some time on the proposal I have made, and I can but think it would meet with the divine blessing. I therefore humbly offer it for your consideration with earnest and affectionate desires for its accomplishment, and for the blessing of God upon it. You are, my dear sisters, highly exalted with privileges. You doubtless bless God for them, and can you answer it to him, or to your own consciences, if you do not make some suitable returns for benefits received ? I feel that confidence in you which leads me to open my mind without reserve. Freedom and sincerity are characteristic of real friendship, and I trust ours is such, founded not on the ebullition of a transient intimacy, but upon that unchangeable basis which will endure through a wasteless eternity. Wherein I err, you will kindly reprove and remonstrate. O may we be enabled, by the influence of the divine Spirit, to act in character for our profession as disciples of him who went about doing good, enduring the cross and despising the shame. May we willingly follow in the steps of self-denial and deadness to the world, " follow him without the camp, bearing his reproach." May we be sufficiently humbled to do some little service and labor of love in the

cause of him, who has done so much for us. Present my respects to your parents, and love to other friends.

With sincerity,

your unworthy sister.

Mary Morton.

In the following letter the writer bewails in a truly christian spirit the religious dissensions, which prevailed in the church and society in New Bedford, at the time it was written.

New Bedford April 1810.

To the Rev. S. H.

Friend beloved in the Lord,

When Zion is afflicted, her children must mourn and be in heaviness. And truly the hand of the Lord is now laid upon us for our iniquities, and we are chastised for our sins. O may the grace of God be sufficient for us, that we may "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time." You have been an eye witness of our unhappy situation, and I have no doubt of your sympathizing care. I feel as if the church was bleeding at every pore. Divisions in sentiment create hardness and unchristian prejudices between brethren and sisters, jarring passions are allowed too much

place in those hearts, where love alone should reign. Satan, the grand deceiver and accuser of the brethren, goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; and doubtless is never better pleased than when the professed friends of Jesus "fall out by the way." In this place those, who have professed faith in Christ and the doctrine of his cross, are watched, censured, and condemned; and for myself, I feel that we deserve all and infinitely more than has befallen us, for we do not live as becometh the gospel of Christ. We must take blame and confusion of face to ourselves, but ascribe unto God righteousness and truth. If the Lord should utterly forsake us, and cut us off from being a church; if he should remove our candlestick out of its place, we must confess that it would be but our deserts. He would be glorified by all holy beings, should he lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet. Sometimes when reflecting upon our sins, our unfaithfulness, our want of that fervent charity which the Apostle recommends, our awful declension from the faith, zeal, and purity of the primitive churches, I am led to fear, that we shall be made monuments of the righteous displeasure of a holy God. But then I reflect on the conduct of our merciful Father to the rebellious house of Israel. Though they provoked him to anger by their sins, yet for his

own name's sake did he bear long with them, and though they be now scattered among every nation and kingdom under heaven, yet with everlasting mercies will he gather them, that his name may be great among the heathen, and that all the earth may know that Israel is his people, and that his faithfulness shall not fail to his chosen. I trust I am enabled, at times, to rest in this promise "Not for your sakes do I these things; but for my own name's sake." If the Lord be for us, who can prevail against us? If we put our trust in the immutable Jehovah, then shall one put ten to flight. Nothing is wanting but a firm confidence in God to make us completely victorious over all our spiritual foes. But where is that to be found? Not in my heart, I am sure. There is ingratitude under the most distinguishing blessings; at all times stupidity, and, in seasons of darkness, sinful distrust. Can such a heart be the residence of one spark of divine grace? God knows. If it be not,—Oh may he have mercy and open my blind eyes; but if there has been the good work of the Spirit begun, may it be perfected, and may a sacred flame of divine love consume every impure particle of dross. We are certainly in a furnace of affliction, and if we possess the same Spirit, which actuated the three ancient worthies, we shall undoubtedly have the presence of

the Son of God, walking with us in the midst of the fire, that it shall not consume us. We have abundant reason to sing of goodness, for the displays of divine grace which our eyes have witnessed the winter past. Eternity will be employed by the happy souls, who we trust have been brought into the glorious liberty of the gospel, in hymning anthems of praise to him, who has redeemed them and washed them in his own blood. But these contentions, which are in themselves so undesirable, are calculated to do us good, if we are the children of promise. They certainly fulfil the scriptures and help to confirm the faith of the heavenly pilgrim. I have a hope that our God will appear for us and will grant us so great a blessing as a faithful gospel minister to lead us in the way of salvation and break unto us the bread of life. If so, his name shall have all the glory, for unto him it belongeth. And indeed whatever may be our state, God will be glorious in holiness ; his name and his nature is love. Whatever we can conceive of excellency, and whatever is infinitely beyond our narrow views of majesty and beauty, are treasured up in the eternal fountain of being and perfection. Here is an inexhaustible source of consolation and delight to those whose hearts have been renewed by grace.

I have not yet received your second letter,

but am hoping every day it will reach my hand. Respecting the subject which I mentioned to you in a former letter, I find the trial very different from my fears—I expected a great cross; but find not that, and now am perplexed with fears that I am actuated by pride, or some other wrong motive. But I hope for divine direction and support, and wish to say with the Poet, "I beg the trial of thine eyes," O my God. You see that I am continually bringing self into view. Why am I not entirely swallowed up in the divine glory, forgetting there is such a creature in existence as myself, except when melted with contrition for my aggravated offences? In heaven there will be no self, no sin, no division; but God will be all and in all. Who is worthy to enter that holy place? Surely none but those who are made so by being washed in the blood of the Lamb, to whom all the glory of their salvation will be ascribed. If my letters become troublesome intrusions, deal plainly with me and tell me. We beg your prayers for us. God knows what we stand in need of, and I trust will teach you what to pray for on our account. May he grant our desires, if consistent with his holy purposes, that you may yet be returned to pray with us. May the grace of God be ever sufficient for you.

Your unworthy friend,
Mary Morton.

The following letter was addressed to a clergyman with whom she was intimate, and on whose ministry she had frequently attended.

Freetown, —— 1811.

To the Rev. S. H.

My esteemed friend,

Every day's experience teaches me how little I know of myself; and that text, Jer. 17, 9. needs no exposition but what an attentive examination of our own hearts will abundantly furnish. Very many times have I acknowledged that my heart was too deceitful to be trusted; yet I am often surprised at the discovery of new treachery; which would not be the case, if I were thoroughly and practically convinced of its real character. It is a great blessing to christians that their Physician perfectly knows the nature, extent and malignity of their disorder; and, though they know it not themselves, yet they are safe in relying upon the infinite skill of their great Healer.

A friend told me that I had made great pretensions to religion, and if I fell back it would give so much greater occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. I acknowledge I am so ignorant of myself, that I know not that I have made great pretensions to religion. If it be true, surely I have been a very great

hypocrite ; for, if I have any religion, it is but very little ; and I am shocked at the dis-honor, which my conduct may have occasion-ed to the cause of religion. None perhaps do greater injury to the cause than high sound-ing hollow professors ; and surely none can be more hateful in the eyes of a holy and jealous God, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men. I hope the sincere prayer of my soul is, that I may not be left thus to serve Satan under a mask of religious zeal. If that is my present character may the Lord in infinite mercy confound the Babel which I have erected, and make me a contrite and broken-hearted be-liever in the Almighty Savior. The irrecon-ciliation of the will appears in an infinite variety of ways. I often think it would be much best for such a frail, unstable, vile crea-ture as I am, to be placed more out of sight in the world, in some very contracted sphere where my name and example would be known only to a few. But if I believe in the univer-sal and particular providence of God, which ought not to be doubted, I must suppose my lot in life to be directed by his unerring hand. Many would smile contemptuously to hear an obscure school-mistress express ideas like these ; but, I trust, as you are acquainted with the responsibility and circumspection necessary in such an employment, you will

easily comprehend my meaning. At some times a sense of the exceeding importance of my trust almost overwhelms me, and I am almost resolved to relinquish it. But if I can be instrumental of more good in that way than in any other, I ought to bless God that he gives me the opportunity, and heartily devote my life, my health, and all that I can command, to the interesting employment. I would still request your prayers, that the path of duty may be enlightened, and that I may ever walk in it with humble, unshaken faithfulness. It appears to me that the invitation to Sandwich is the call of Providence; and if so, all obstacles will be removed out of the way in due season. Omitting the consideration of my insufficiency to fill the station suitably, I think it would be very much to my mind. I have for some time thought that a situation as an assistant to a religious Preceptor would be not only more congenial to my feelings, but more suitable for my talents, than to have the whole care of a school. If I can see any way of leaving Middleboro' without violating the precept which teaches us to do to others as we wish they should do to us, I know of no other obstacle to prevent my compliance with Mr. B's request. Wherever I may be placed I hope for a continuation of your friendship and counsel. It is a privilege which I esteem highly to be favor-

ed with frequent letters from christian friends. And if not deceived, I desire them to deal with me with the greatest plainness in pointing out my errors, and searching my heart to discover its hypocrisy.

It appears to me important that the truth should be preached in B. and I hope it may speedily triumph. Its advocates have great trials and need large supplies of grace to help them, in a right spirit, to bear and forbear. Human nature is so inclined to rise in a controversy about religious tenets, that I think there is great danger of using carnal weapons of pride, contention and the like, instead of those which are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. We have in such circumstances peculiar need of following the example of him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; but endured great contradiction of sinners against himself. I hope you will every one be kept by the mighty power of God, and be made to shine brightest in this furnace of affliction, and that your moderation may be known unto all men. Present my affectionate congratulations to Mrs. H.

Yours, with esteem and respect,
Mary Morton.

In the following letter the writer appears to be the advocate of disinterested benevo-

lence, though she objects to the language in which it is taught by divines on the ground of its being unscriptural. We presume she had indeed no objection to the doctrine; for a very pure spirit of benevolence appears in most of her letters; and we would charitably hope that the objections of many others to this doctrine are objections only to the letter and not to the spirit.

Middleborough, — 1811.
To Miss A. S.

Dear Sister,

I hope you are enjoying the blessings of christian intercourse, leisure for religious reading, faithful preaching, and the presence of Christ in all religious duties. With that you must be happy, and without that the soul will pine and languish amidst the most favorable means of improvement. If we are not deceived, experience has taught us that nothing can satisfy the desires of our souls, nothing can enliven devotion, but the invigorating influences of that Spirit which is the light of the world. It appears to me an important point gained, when the christian can feel a full and abiding sense of his absolute dependence on the Spirit of Truth for every, even the smallest, ray of spiritual light. Are we not naturally prone to forget our entire dark-

ness; and, when we feel the enlivening influence from on high, are we not sometimes tempted to think it is our own, till its departure convinces us of our presumption. The Psalmist confesses to God, "All my springs are in thee." Happy for us could we feel that, and rejoice in it. It is really an unspeakable blessing that our supplies of grace are not put in our own power. Were that the case, how soon should we lavish all our stock and ruin our souls. But if I have a correct idea on that subject, the christian's graces, his life, his all, are treasured and centred in Christ Jesus, who will bestow whatever is needful in every circumstance of life, in every trial, and in the awful hour of dissolution. So that the christian has nothing of his own in himself any more than the vilest sinner. And this view of things opens to my apprehension the meaning of many passages of scripture, which speak of living by faith, walking by faith, and being dead and the life hid with Christ in God. If this opinion be according to the truth, and if it be not I hope you will kindly rectify my error, the believer, if he would live comfortably and walk as becometh the gospel, must live entirely by faith on the Son of God. Self must then be denied and self-righteousness trampled under foot. But to those, who sincerely and supremely regard the blessed Mediator, it must

be attended with an indescribable sweetness and peace. My beloved N****, may we, poor, polluted, self-destroying sinners, be made to understand and know by happy experience, what it is to live by faith in Jesus. May we be united to him by a living faith, and by the divine influence of his holy Spirit, may we be made fruitful in every good work to the praise of the glory of his grace. We certainly owe our whole selves, our all to him, who hath, as we sometimes presume to believe, redeemed us with his own blood. But I am so bound by a selfish spirit, as it were by a chain of brass or fetters of iron, that I have reason seriously to question whether I have ever been enabled to rise and act above it. I think it does appear very loathsome and hateful; but I am not sufficiently humbled for it.— Nothing can be more inconsistent than a selfish christian. How unlike to him who made himself of no reputation, tho' he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Our hearts naturally are entirely selfish, and consequently opposed to the gospel temper; but as far as grace prevails and the new man is put on, it will be subdued; and that charity which seeketh not her own will be the governing principle. Many object to the term “disinterested benevolence.” But I cannot perceive that it conveys any thing more than the meaning of the Apostle, when speaking

of that charity which is the essence of religion. Surely if she “seeketh not her own,” it must imply a disinterested principle. I freely acknowledge, however, that I should feel a degree of satisfaction, if the defenders of the doctrines of grace would confine themselves more to the language of scripture; not because I have any objection myself to the terms they use, but because it would be more likely to stop the mouths of gainsayers. In that case they could not, as they now frequently do, dispute that the ideas advanced are contained in the Bible. But the time is coming, when every mouth will be stopped, and all the world will become guilty before God. The Lord alone will be exalted in that day. O may we be then and ever found clothed in the righteousness of Christ, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear. With sincere wishes for your prosperity temporal and spiritual, I am your affectionate friend,

Mary Morton.

The following letter, written in 1810, certainly breathes a spirit of fraternal affection, and of tender solicitude for the immortal welfare of her nearest relations.

New Bedford, Dec. 22, 1810.

Amidst the cares of business and the en-

dearments of domestic scenes, my dear brother and sister have been called to witness the solemnities of death and the struggles of dissolving nature; and with tears of filial grief to resign a parent to the dust. The event is painfully afflictive; and, though I have never been taught by experience how to sympathize, yet I am not altogether insensible to your painful emotions; and the sincere desire of my heart is that your wounds may be healed by the great and good Physician of soul and body. May you be consoled by the heavenly Comforter, who has access to the heart, whose joys are such as the world know not of. May your hearts be inclined to hear and attend to the call of God in this providence, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." How much is implied in the admonition, "Be ye also ready?" Naturally we are "children of wrath even as others," estranged from our Creator, and enemies to him by wicked works; born under the curse of a violated law, the awful threatenings of which are in full force against every one who is not a true believer in the Lord Jesus; and nothing, but the compassionate forbearance of that God against whom we are so unreasonably rebelling, prevents the immediate execution of that awful sentence, "the soul that sinneth it shall die." Language cannot express more strikingly,

than is expressed in the sacred volume, the amazing danger of impenitent sinners. Unreconciled to God, strangers to the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, surely in such a state we are most unready to meet the Son of man, when he cometh to death and the day of final Judgment. That we are naturally insensible of being in a state of such imminent danger is not a proof of our safety. If we receive the Bible as the inspiration of God, we must be confirmed in the belief of our danger, and also of our insensibility to it. Infinitely condescending is the great Lord and Lawgiver of the universe, that he stoops to reason with his rebellious subjects, and invite them to return unto him. He has provided an infinite atonement for all their offences, has opened a new and living way of reconciliation by offering his "beloved Son," his "Fellow and Equal" for a mediatorial sacrifice, that we who are dead in trespasses and sins might live, forever live, in the realms of heavenly glory. The compassionate Redeemer, who was "God manifest in the flesh," entreats us by every moving consideration to turn, repent, and live.—"Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." He has also purchased the mission of the Holy Spirit, to "reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judg-

ment." And do not our consciences witness that he has been sent to us. Have we not felt ourselves reproved of sin, and at times have we not been filled with fears of future judgment? If we have, O then, as we value the eternal interests of our souls, let us attend to the calls while the day of grace continues; for we are assured that he will not always strive, but if we refuse to hear and attend, if we despise the chastenings and calls of God, he will laugh at our calamity and mock when our fear cometh. O my dear brother and sister, what is the enjoyment of this world of sin and death, to the unfading glories of heaven? What is the honor of this world, to that which cometh from God,—to be honored as children of the eternal Father, and to inherit a crown of glory which fadeth not away?—What are the most exalted pleasures which can be enjoyed, while in a state of alienation from God,—which can charm but for a moment and then be extinguished forever by the night of eternal death and despair,—what are they, when compared with the joys of pardoned sin, peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a rich prelibation of heavenly enjoyments? I would entreat my dear brother and sister immediately to weigh these important concerns,—now while life and health are granted, while there is hope that the door of mercy is not shut against

them; while the Lord says, "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." Ask yourselves solemnly, which is of the greatest consequence, a few days of earthly care and disappointment, in the service of the great enemy of all good, or an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away.—May the Lord enable you to make a wise choice,—a choice which angels and saints will approve, which God requires, and which you will reflect on with approbation and triumph in the solemn hour of death, and in the tremendous hour of the general dissolution of all things. How can I endure the thought that my nearest earthly friends, to whom God has given talents for usefulness, should any longer withhold their hearts from God and abuse his bounties by employing them in the service of the world and the grand apostate. The words of Christ are "he that is not with me is against me." Every motive which ought to influence a rational immortal being urges you to an immediate attention to your souls,—to repentance and faith in the Savior. The souls of your children are committed to your care and will be required at your hands. O let them not perish through your neglect. The day of death and the day of judgment present themselves to my view, not as idle tales, but as solemn realities, which we must as certainly pass

through, as that we are now in existence.— How can I endure that any of my dear friends should be called to meet them while out of the ark of safety. Lest it should be through my neglect, let me continually warn, entreat, and beseech with the utmost importunity. And after all that can be said, the half is not told respecting their eternal moment. Language connot paint it, neither can we conceive it until the curtain of time is dropped and the awful realities of eternity open to our astonished view. Yet let me not despair, but look to him who hath said, whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, believing, ye shall receive, peradventure he will give repentance to the saving of the soul. Realizing that the time is short, let us work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.

Your affectionate sister,
Mary Morton.

Middleborough, — 1811.
To Miss B. M.

My heart has been greatly rejoiced, my beloved sister, in hearing that you have been enabled to come forward publicly and own the name of our once crucified and now ascended King. He is worthy of all honor and praise; and the most zealous services of

all his creatures cannot equal his infinite merit. Of what astonishing presumption and ingratitude then shall those be found guilty, who despise his righteousness and go about to establish a righteousness of their own. And it is what we all naturally incline to do.— Nothing but the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit will effect the mighty work of leading the sinner to renounce his own goodness and submit to the sovereign mercy of God. The rejected and misconceived doctrine of Election is the only solid basis on which to rest the church. Christ has declared that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his church. He who hath promised is also able to perform. Being stronger than the strong man armed, and all power in heaven and on earth being committed to his hands, what can possibly prevent the accomplishment of his promise? Certainty nothing. It is impossible that one jot or tittle should fail of all his promises. Therefore every one, who has committed to him the keeping of his soul, is perfectly secure. Nothing shall separate him from the arms of everlasting love. If Jesus be himself the corner Stone on which the church is built; and if he also assures us of his determination to complete the building, which determination, I conceive, involves in it the doctrine of election, then we may safely trust, and rejoice in the belief of it. The

counsel of the Lord shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. His purposes are, like his nature, immutable. Holy and righteous are all his judgments; and to the truly reconciled soul nothing can afford greater security and satisfaction, than a firm belief of the universal government of God. Will not the spontaneous language of the believer be in unison with the royal Psalmist, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof."

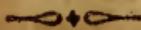
My heart expands to welcome you to the fellowship of our church. I trust the Lord by his Spirit has made you measurably sensible of your own unworthiness, and given you faith to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption. I hope and trust you are interested in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. In addition to the ties of affection which had united our hearts, we are now under solemn, covenant obligations to watch over and to love each other. May divine grace be imparted to us to make us faithful unto death;—faithful to him by whose holy name we are called, to each other, and in all the relative duties of life. I must request an interest in your petitions, and the plainest reproof, whenever you find me wandering from duty's path. I hope I may be enabled to comply with your request of a

similar nature, if need should ever require.—But I hope the grace of God may be abundantly imparted to you, making you a means of good to all around, and a blessing to the church in that place. The flock in B. is a “little flock;” but if truly a flock belonging to Christ, they may receive the precious word, “fear not for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

All the servants of Prince Immanuel are not called to endure the same conflicts, or to act in the same station; but all are dear to him, as the purchase of his blood, and are placed by him in the stations, where they are needed, and grace is given them equal to their day. They are clad with the King’s livery and fed from his table. The righteousness of Christ is the glorious robe which believers wear; and though the blind world cannot discover its efficacy or glory, and have no knowledge of the dignity it ensures; yet he knoweth his own sheep, and will not be regardless of the pledge of his love. The solemn day of final decision will discover the characters of those, who, though they may have been set at nought by the world and counted as the off-scouring of all things, are precious in the sight of the Lord and counted as his jewels.—I think with concern of my dear N****, and would request a remembrance to her as well as to my other pupils. I have frequently

the joy to hear from one place and another of little children and young persons, who are hopefully converted and brought to give their hearts to the Savior in the morning of their days. Should it please God to operate thus in B., it would greatly rejoice the hearts of all good people ; and the souls of many dear young friends there are equally valuable with those in other places. How shall they escape if they neglect so great salvation.

Mary Morton.



Upon perusing this and some other letters in the series, we may remark that those who reproach themselves most severely for their languor are often the most lively in spiritual affections ; and, while they are lamenting their own barrenness, they appear evidently to others to be fruitful in good works. This strain of lamentation may be indulged both in conversation and in writing, until it becomes a mere whining affectation. Then it is disgusting. But when it is evidently the offspring of sincere conviction, it denotes christian humility. Moses wist not when his face shone.

Middleborough, — 1811.

To Mrs. F. C.

Respected and dear Sister,

You have frequently and kindly encouraged me to write, and I enjoy too much pleasure in complying with the request to omit any opportunity. As I advance in age and experience I discover more and more of human depravity around me, and more especially within me, and am led to wonder at the patience and forbearance of God. Were it not for the assurance which the scriptures contain, that for his own name's sake God will continue his church in the world, and will gather in his elect; that Christ shall "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;" what hope could we reasonably indulge that another soul would ever be regenerated? Did the all-important work of salvation rest on the free will of natural men, how sad, how hopeless, would be the state of our world? But, adored be the wisdom and grace of God, he has concerted a glorious plan, whereby he can glorify himself in the salvation of an unnumerable multitude of all nations, tongues, and people. What an astonishing, inconceivable glory will be reflected on the perfections and attributes of the eternal Jehovah at the day of Judgment. Then, I conceive, the ways of Providence, which are in this world often inscrutable even

to the godly soul will be fully unfolded; and the wisdom of all, as well as the benevolent design, will appear in the clearest light. The tempted, afflicted believer shall see and rejoice in the grace, which led him in the right way; and will doubtless be fully sensible that all his trials were necessary, and that he never was made to feel heaviness unless there was a necessity for it. My mother says she has enjoyed much heart-felt satisfaction in reflecting how gloriously the character of God, and his wisdom and goodness in the dealings of his providence, will be cleared from the imputations, which an ungodly world is continually casting upon them. Then, at the day of final consummation, all these things will be opened. God's ways will appear as they are, glorious and holy; and confusion will be poured upon the despisers and opposers of his government. All his ways are perfect rectitude. Holy beings, saints, angels, cherubim, and seraphim will unite in saying "holy, holy Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

O that I could feel the importance of these things;—that my heart could be raised to heavenly contemplations, and freed from earthly ties. How true is it that we are of the earth, earthy. I have it for a continual lamentation, that my affections are chained, as it were, down to earth. Sometimes one

particular object will operate as a weight to sink me down, and, if I am enabled to lay that aside, or if it be taken away, then another will take its place ; and thus I go on sinning against God. Those, who know my situation as to outward things, may think there is nothing to prevent my being wholly devoted to the service of God. There is nothing but a wicked heart, a slothful carnal mind ; therefore is my sin the more aggravated. How shall I, who have enjoyed such precious privileges, answer for such a poor improvement of them ? I have solemn reason to fear I shall be cut down, as a cumberer of the ground, and receive my portion among the despisers and rejecters of the gospel. But I ought not to burden you with the tale of my unfruitfulness, I hope and trust you enjoy the smiles of the Savior in your soul, and feel his grace to be sufficient for you in every trial. I greatly desire to see you. But above all I hope the peace of God may be with you.

Mary Morton,

Middleborough, — 1811.

To Miss H. P.

Dear Sister,

Your last kind letter did not reach me till some time after I had written to you. It was

truly welcome ; and, as much as my cold heart is capable, I have sympathized in your complaints. We are inconsistent, unreconciled, unholy creatures. We are naturally destitute of every good thing ; and not only destitute of the least principle of good, but wholly opposed to that which is good, resisting the grace of God, and doing despite to the Spirit of truth. Is not this the picture which the infallible word has drawn of the human heart ; and our daily experience confirms the humiliating truth, I do not think, my dear, that your complaints are peculiar ; but many, very many, who are considered the friends of Christ, are making the same lamentation, and are ready to exclaim against themselves as the vilest wretches living. But though a knowledge, that many christians are exercised in the same manner as we are, may keep us from despair ; yet I conceive we ought not to rest on that ground, but seek a fresh application of the blood of sprinkling to our polluted souls. The greater our sense of sin, and danger, the more speedy and urgent should be our cries to him who is able to deliver, and has declared himself willing to receive all, who feel their need of his grace. I sometimes think I have a faint gleam of light from the infinite fountain, which is contained in him, who is the light of the world. But alas, I fear my conduct gives the lie to

such an assertion. Blindness and obduracy are still my companions, and instead of making progress in divine knowledge, I fear I am much more carnal, than when you saw me. I must repeat again in this letter how much I need your friendly counsel and reproof. But as we cannot now enjoy past privileges, let us improve those which are yet in our power by writing frequently. Soon we shall be placed beyond the reach of means. And if we be the friends of Christ, it will be a blessed remove; otherwise, most awful. O may we not be among that most unhappy number of professed friends of Christ, who must hear the heart-rending sound, "Depart, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity."

Since beginning my letter I have seen Mrs. J., who has given me some particulars respecting the trials of your Church in F. She seems dejected on that account, and indeed I cannot wonder, for we are prone to forget the promised care of the great Shepherd; and are ready to despond, when appearances are dark. But we should do well to remember that the children of God will never be utterly forsaken, though they may be in difficulties; and may be carried captives into Chaldea and Babylon; yet even there God will be with them, and will guard them by the mighty hand of his power. Do not our souls many times say, blessed be God for the safety

of his church? "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her." Hath he said it, and shall he not do it? "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper." Is it not enough? O let us "chide our unbelieving fears, and turn them to a song." We cannot see how all these crossing and intricate events can be made subservient to the great good of the church. But we are blind; and, if we realized it, and were willing to believe what we cannot see by reason of this blindness, we should live more comfortably; and our conduct would be more honorable to our great Master. We have beloved and faithful earthly friends, and we believe and trust them.—Do we as readily trust our Heavenly Friend? Unbelief, like a canker, eats out the very heart of our religion, and makes us dreadfully unprofitable, as well as without comfort. May it be banished from our hearts, and may we this year, if never before, bring forth some fruit to the glory of God.

Your unworthy sister,
Mary Morton.



The following letter relates to the ordination of a Pastor over the church in New Bedford, of which the subject of these memoirs was a member. This circumstance alone was

sufficient to render the transaction a subject of interest to her. But it was a day of peculiar trial with that church. This ordination was solemnized, when the church were in a state of separation from the parish, and of voluntary exclusion from the meeting-house. They were resolved to maintain their principles, and their independence in opposition to a majority in the society. This ordination was therefore a subject of peculiar interest to her, and to all who separated from the society. Though their trials were severe, they were blessed. That church has enjoyed the smiles of Providence, and increasing prosperity to the present time.

Middleborough, — 1811.

To Miss B. M.

Dear Sister,

I acknowledge with grateful emotions, the receipt of two letters since I wrote you, the last of which gave information of Mr. H's ordination. I was very desirous to be present, but could see no way consistently to leave my school without a neglect of duty.

I have since been informed that the exercises were peculiarly solemn and interesting, and I expected to hear it. The council were such as we trust feel the importance of these transactions, and are apparently favored with

much of the divine presence. May the seed then sown be watered by the divine Spirit, that it may spring up, and bear much fruit to the praise and glory of God. I trust the love of Gospel Truth is so deeply engraven on the hearts of a precious few in New Bedford, that it never will be hidden. Providential circumstances, which are often disclosing, strengthen me in the belief that the truth must be preached, as well as believed, in that place. O that it may be accompanied with divine power for the growth of christians; and be made as sharp arrows in the hearts of the King's enemies, whereby they may be made to fall under him,

Is there not at this time a peculiar call for the zealous exertions of those, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity? Commotions in churches, as well as in earthly associations, are frequent and portentous; and the events of Providence, I think, loudly call for an attention to the "signs of the times." Surely all these things are not matters of chance; but are solemn calls to the friends of Zion to lift up a standard, because iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Ought we not very diligently and carefully to search and enquire into our real characters;—since it appears evident the time is rapidly advancing, when a separation will be made between the clean and the unclean, the holy and pro-

fane. The great Head of the Church certainly will not always suffer his “little flock,” to be so blended with the world, as to be scarcely discernible. “My kingdom is not of this world.”—The kingdom of Christ is entirely different from all other kingdoms. It is founded on a different basis, even the eternal Rock of Ages ; governed by different laws ; supported by different weapons. Tho’ despised and set at nought by a wicked world ; its excellency and glory are indescribable. It will be continually unfolding to the astonishment of all holy beings throughout eternity. And now, dear sister, let us carefully enquire, whether we are subjects of this glorious kingdom? Have we the external garments and the internal adorning?

We have reason to bless the infinite compassion of God, that there is a door opened for the reception of subjects ; and on such an infinitely gracious plan, that the most vile and obdurate rebel may be received and treated as a friend, whenever he will lay down his arms. Though he is altogether filthy and diseased, here is cleansing and health.—Though destitute of clothing and arms of defence, here is white raiment clean and pure, and the whole armor of the gospel. The real christian is “a citizen of no mean city,”—and is enlisted under the banner of a glorious Prince, even the blessed Immanuel.

Is there not evidently at this day a violent struggle between the two kingdoms of light and of darkness? Satan is inflamed with great rage, because he hath but a short time. We know which will prevail; for with the King of Zion is everlasting strength. But a question arises in my mind;—Am I returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and enlisted under the banner of the cross; or, am I still a stranger and an enemy?—May we be assisted in searching and trying ourselves; and, if we are interested in these great blessings, may the Spirit bear witness with our spirits, that we are born of God. Give my love to N—, hope she will become a young disciple.

Your unworthy friend,
Mary Morton.

The following letter contains some very good reflexions upon the spirit of controversy.

Middleborough, — 1811.

To Miss H. P.

Dear Sister,

It appears to me, if I had a real love for the peace of Zion, I could weep in secret places for the trials of my brethren and sisters in B. In the New Testament the church

is called the “house of God,” the “body of Christ.” Reflecting on the situation of the church on both sides of the river, are we not led to enquire “is Christ divided?” Where is the unity, the harmony the fellowship of the saints? A house divided against itself cannot stand. We have reason to be very grateful for what has been done for the establishment of the truth; and, from what has been done for us, we have reason to trust that he who has, as we cannot but believe, “begun a good work,” will perfect the same, and purify his house and people. Though to us the appearance may be dark, yet infinite wisdom and almighty power are sufficient to overrule all for the accomplishment of the glorious purposes of grace. In such seasons we have peculiar need of humility and watchfulness, lest a wrong spirit should actuate us;—lest we should not preserve the meekness of the lamb. There is so much of the old man remaining, that we are exceedingly prone to improper warmth in controversies. The apostolic injunctions, “let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil-speaking be put away from you with all malice,” and, “be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you,” contain a sweet portrait of the christian temper. Alas that I feel no more conformed to it. When

we all agree in sentiment and practice it is not so difficult to "love as brethren." But when our opinions are controverted and our wishes thwarted, it is less easy to practice the gospel precepts. Every real christian has this promise, "my grace is sufficient for thee." And that is enough. Let us have faith to plead that, and we need not fear. I feel for you on account of the trials you are called to endure, and wish I could enjoy a spirit of prayer to plead for you ; but I feel nothing as I ought ; in all things I come short and in many offend all. But I trust you are supported by an unseen hand, and comforted by the promised presence of the holy Spirit. I cannot express, my dear H*****, now much I wish to see you. May you enjoy much of the divine presence, and be made a blessing to Zion.

Your unworthy sister,
Mary Morton.

If the christian reader does not find that his own heart responds to the correctness of the sentiments contained in the following extract of a letter to her parents, he may at least be consoled by the recollection that the perusal of it occupied his time but a few moments. It is short, and appears to have been composed in haste, but is the effusion of a pious mind.

Middleborough, — 1811.

I am rationally convinced that there is no object worthy the pursuit of a rational, immortal being, but the glory of God and the promotion of his cause. I am in a measure sensible, that there is happiness in no other path of life. Honor is a puff of empty air. Worldly pleasures belie their name. The refinement of intellectual enjoyment cannot satisfy the soul. Only in the pure and benevolent religion of Jesus Christ is there real peace and solid joy. Yet alas, instead of being devoted to the service of the Lord, I am entrenched with a spirit of selfishness, as with a prison wall, and nothing but almighty grace can set me free, or enable me to be what I should be, and to live as I ought. O that the compassionate Savior, who came to preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, would bring me up out of my spiritual dungeon and put his own garment on me that the shame of my nakedness might not appear. O that it might please him to prepare me for some humble service in his vineyard. The depravity of my nature, the plague of my heart, and the inconsistency of my life, are sufficient to keep me very low in my own eyes, did I rightly reflect on them; but I am prone to be proud and haughty. I cannot say

with the Psalmist, "my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty;" but, if not deceived, I can say I sincerely wish to feel so. I hope you are enabled to live more like christians at home, than I do abroad, for I am very far from being engaged as I ought.

Your unworthy daughter,
Mary Morton.

The two following letters manifest a pious solicitude for one who had been her pupil, that she might become a follower of the Lamb.

Freetown, — 1812.
To Miss S. H.

Can my dear S**** after a silence of several years receive with complacency a line from so negligent a correspondent? During the winter I felt a strong inclination to write you, and determined to embrace the first convenient opportunity of conveyance; but before any presented I was informed of the revival in A. On this account I have thought much more of you and the other young ladies, my former pupils. If the desires of my heart are granted, you are all ere this partakers of the great salvation of the gospel. Truly "now is the accepted time and now is the day of salvation." Jesus is now passing that way

and poor blind sinners are now especially called upon to "return, repent, and live." He is waiting to be gracious, saying, "behold I stand at the door and knock. If any will open unto me I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." His infinite condescension astonishes the heavenly host; and those of the human family, whose eyes are not sealed by sin, are exclaiming, "behold what manner of love." The unfathomable depths of his love, which passeth knowledge, will furnish a delightful subject of contemplation, and will be continually unfolding through a wasteless eternity. O how dreadfully depraved are our hearts to despise and reject such offers of pardoning love, as are made to us at the expense of a Savior's sweat and blood. Can we believe, my dear S******, that a spark of native goodness exists in such hearts? Surely "the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint." And the malady is not only universal, but exceedingly obstinate, so much so that almighty power is necessary for its removal. The vast importance of our souls' concerns cannot be too much impressed on our minds. We are worse than lunatic to neglect them as we do. The Spirit of God has recorded in the inspired volume the infinite danger, to which we are ever exposed, while in a state of unregeneracy. Enemies to God, and without Christ; continually contending with that

almighty arm, which created and preserves us, provoking divine anger by our transgressions; despising the riches of his grace, and defying by our conduct the threatenings of his vengeance, how exceedingly vile must we be in the sight of God? And this, my dear, is a very faint sketch of the real state in which you and I are living, unless we have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into God's marvellous light. Ought we not then immediately to enquire, what our real characters are? If we have passed from death unto life, we must have some evidence of it; and, if we have not, we are this moment under sentence of condemnation, and exposed to all the threatened judgments of God against those, who believe not the gospel. Infinite forbearance now proclaims, "to-day, after so long a time, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." If we now refuse to return, it may hereafter be said to us, "because I have called and ye refused, I also will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh." "My spirit shall not always strive with man."

Permit me, my dear S., with the ardor of affectionate friendship, as in the fear of God, to entreat you, if you have not already done it, immediately to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, yielding yourself to his service as one alive from the dead. Can we

wish for a more glorious Savior or a more compassionate High Priest ? It is an unspeakable honor to be a subject of so glorious a King. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. Notwithstanding he was exalted with the Father above all blessing and honor, yet he descended to become of no reputation and take upon him the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that he might open a way for the everlasting salvation of his enemies and murderers. Infinite compassion dwells in his heart ; eternal glory is at his disposal ; and, fearful truth, everlasting destruction awaits his incorrigible enemies, when he shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel. Now the sweet language of invitation and entreaty dwells on his lips. " Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." " Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die." The great salvation is freely offered without money and without price. May we be sweetly drawn unto him that we may be filled with all joy and peace in believing, that our sins may be pardoned and our souls prepared for the coming of the Lord.

I have heard with pleasure that your aunt F. has become a disciple of Christ. I hope the information is correct ; and that I shall

hear the same intelligence from all my other pupils.

With sincere affection, yours, &c.

Mary Morton.

New Bedford, — 1812.

To Miss S. H.

From the tenor of your last letter, my dear S., I was led to hope that the Holy Spirit was striving with you to bring you to an experimental knowledge of your own lost, wretched, and guilty state, and of the only way of salvation through a precious Redeemer. Tho' I have not heard from A. for some time, I hope the good work is still carried on, that you are a sharer, and have begun your everlasting song of praise for redeeming love. Whatever blinded, stupid mortals may think of religious revivals, and of conversion by the influence of the Holy Spirit, I am convinced by the concurrent testimony of scripture and experience, that they are the greatest blessings, which can be bestowed on a people. — And perhaps no sin has a more direct tendency to harden the heart, and sear the conscience, than opposition, or neglect of such a work of God. Melancholy indeed must be the state of any one, who has seen such a day of Christ's power, and refused to submit.

Must not this be their despairing complaint, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Yet for the encouragement of any mourning soul, who is at any time made willing to come to Christ, and is fearful the day of grace is past, the inspired penman says, "To-day, after so long a time, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The most unequivocal testimony is given in the volume of inspiration of the willingness of Christ to receive all, who will come to him for salvation. "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"—Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Are we convinced of having a hard and stony heart. The promise will apply, "I will take away the heart of stone and give you an heart of flesh." If a sense of inward pollution press heavy upon the mind, the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. The religion of Jesus Christ is exactly suited to the case of guilty, self-destroyed sinners. No possible case can be found, for which there is not ample provision in the gospel. Infinite wisdom could not devise, nor infinite love execute a plan more honorable to the divine attributes, nor more safe or more happy for the humble soul. Yet all this wisdom, which is the wonder of angels and saints, is esteemed foolishness by the wise of this world, and is rejected with disdain. And why? Because it levels

the pride of man and exalts the glorious character of God. If my dear S. wishes to seek for glory and immortal blessedness, let her enlist under the banner of the Savior, who hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

I sometimes hope I have some small discoveries of the glory of the gospel salvation, and am filled with astonishment that I can live so amazingly stupid. I see the riches of divine grace, in a very imperfect manner, but am frequently distressed by desponding gloomy fears, for the want of faith, and the unwillingness of my carnal heart to come to Christ. I do by no means feel or live according to the gospel. But it is not owing to any defect in that. My own obstinacy and blindness are the cause. Yet I feel that it is important for others, even if I myself should be a castaway. The souls of others are of equal value, and eternal life will be to them equally precious; and their superior talents for usefulness perhaps makes it more desirable that they should embrace the gospel. None will perish because there is not an infinite fullness;—none will be lost because their sins are too great to be cleansed by the blood of atonement. Nothing will shut the soul out of heaven but persevering impenitence. Whom then will the condemned sinner find to accuse as the cause of his damnation? Will not his mouth be stop-

ped by a consciousness that he has been his own destroyer? Fearful thought, that a being, formed for immortality, should by his own madness and perverse refusal of offered salvation plunge himself into hopeless despair, and make that immortality a curse! With perfect truth is it said "madness is in their hearts while they live." In the hour of reflexion, when the actions of our past lives come up in remembrance, are we not astonished at the long-suffering and forbearance of God to us? Should we thus have borne with a fellow creature, even a beloved friend, much less with a relentless enemy? And now even after such displays of divine compassion, are we ready to believe fully in the Savior and devote ourselves unreservedly to his service? I hope we shall be made willing in the day of God's power; that our hearts may be subdued by the love of Jesus, and thereby constrained to live to his glory. But if we should perish after the enjoyment of such privileges, the throne of God will be guiltless, and we must be speechless. May the Lord graciously humble us and give us joy and peace in believing.

Your affectionate friend,
Mary Morton.

Miss Morton, while she resided in New Bedford and in other places, comparatively free from worldly cares, and with all the ardor of youth, was peculiarly devoted to the cause of Missions. By her influence especially a Female Association was formed at New Bedford in 1812, styled "the Heathen Friends." She drew up a Constitution. She met with many kindred spirits in that place, who were prepared to second her in this work of disinterested benevolence; and the society flourished. It continues to prosper to the present day.

This association originated among the female members of the congregational church, but was not confined to them. The society invited females of all denominations, ranks, and ages to unite with them, and their number soon became respectable. No certain sum was required as an annual contribution; but every one was permitted to contribute according to her ability. The only officers appointed were a Committee to collect and appropriate the contributions; and these were called Assistants. The society was organized without any ostentation or parade; and the contributions though not large were respectable.

By the influence of Miss Morton other similar associations were formed in Rochester, Wareham, and other places in the vicinity.—

These Branches of the Parent Society at New Bedford still continue, and their annual contributions are among the rills which now flow into the treasury of the American Board. The influence of the Subject of these Memoirs was seldom seen; but her letters gave the first impulse to missionary exertion, especially among the females, in that part of the State.

What gave the first impulse of missionary zeal to her own mind may be perceived from the following letter to a lady in Hallowell, written as early as 1811.

Freetown, Sept. 8, 1811.
To Mrs. N. N.

Dear Sister,

In the tenth number of the Panoplist, Mr. Burder's letter has excited my attention.— This sentence particularly, "The call for Missionaries in the Namaqua country is great," induced a train of thought which I shall take the liberty of communicating to you, as I trust you are, by divine grace, inspired with something of a Missionary spirit. Could I be made a mean of any good in a cause so glorious, I should esteem it beyond any earthly honor or emolument. There are many powerful reasons, which may be urged in favor of the African Mission, reasons which we, as a nation, and as a professedly christian people,

ought to feel. Though the New England States have not been deeply stained with the guilt of the slave trade, yet we are not wholly free. And as we are confederated with the Southern States, where slavery abounds, we, as a part of the nation, must feel ourselves very guilty on that account. Have we any right to expect national blessings unless national sins are repented of? And is it not the duty of every individual, however private may be the station in which he or she is called to act, to mourn and bewail over national sins, and to do all in his power towards their amendment? The awful prevalence, the indescribable cruelty of the slave trade is in my view a powerful argument in favor of the African Mission. Past sins cannot it is true be atoned for in this way.—We must look to him who alone hath power to forgive sins for the pardon of this as well as all other crimes.—And if the infinite riches of his grace can be extended to such guilty creatures as we, do not gratitude, love, and all the affections, which ought to fill the hearts of ransomed rebels, loudly call on us to be active in the service of him who has redeemed us with his own blood? Is it not highly rational, that we should use every exertion to spread the knowledge of his name among our dying fellow creatures, that they also may turn from their evil ways and live? Is there any por-

tion of the human family who have a greater claim upon our benevolence, than those who have suffered so long the unspeakable miseries of slavery from our hands? The name of Christian, in the minds of poor Africans, and indeed of many other nations, is associated with the basest crimes and the most detestable cruelty. May those who are real christians be enabled by grace to make such benevolent exertions for the spreading of the gospel and the salvation of the poor heathen, as shall convince them of the excellence, the purity, and benevolence of real christianity.

The Lord has opened a door for the gospel in South Africa, and may we not hope, yea confidently expect, that the blessed news will reach and gladden the coast of Guinea? May the time soon come when those miserable shores, where now is heard the lamentable cries of separating parents and children, doomed to perpetual, merciless slavery, shall become vocal with the praises of God; when the peaceful kingdom of Christ shall there be established on the ruin of the empire of darkness. "The call for Missionaries in the Namaqua country is great." If so, the call for pecuniary aid must also be great; and the necessity of persevering prayer, that the Lord of the harvest would raise and qualify laborers for that part of his extensive harvest, must

be obvious. In this state of affairs, is there nothing for American females to do? They have already been blessed as means of doing considerable; but is there nothing more in their power? The cent establishment is good; private acts of beneficence are indispensable in the christian character; and it may be that many in moderate circumstances do thus use all the superfluity of their income. But do we make such sacrifices as we ought? Let us reflect on the self-denial and poverty of ancient saints, and above all, on the example of him, who though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor; and shall we not find in ourselves many instances of self-indulgence, that might be dispensed with, and the expense directed to a more benevolent channel, even the sending of the gospel to the poor benighted Africans? I request your opinion upon the plan of forming an Association for the purpose of aiding the African Mission. It may be stipulated that the sacrifice of a superfluous article of dress, or other unnecessary expense, may be expected in a matter of such moment. I doubt not but the hearts of many pious females in the country would be opened, and they would rejoice in the opportunity of rendering such a service to the cause of Christ.—They would esteem it a privilege to deny themselves many personal outward ornaments, if it might by a divine blessing con-

tribute for the purpose of sending the gospel to our jettie brethren and sisters, whose souls are as valuable as our own, and who stand in the same perishing need of the robe of Christ's righteousness. I must acknowledge that I have a strong presumption that something of this kind may be done; but, as it may be only the effect of youthful animation, I shall wait till I have the decision of your judgment.

Your unworthy sister,

Mary Morton.

Middleborough, — 1811.

To Miss B. M.

Dear Sister,

I have read with much interest the little pamphlet you handed me, pleased to observe the effect of pure religion on the heart, and ashamed that I am no more conformed to an example so amiable. The purity and divine excellence of the christian religion must be more and more perceived, the more closely it is examined. Though, by reason of the natural darkness of my mind, I have very imperfect discoveries of its glories, yet I am constrained to believe them infinite and unspeakable. Jesus said to his disciples, "ye are the light of the world." And without this divine light, the effulgence of the gospel,

the world would be entirely enveloped in the gross darkness of heathenism, a striking account of which is given in the late publications of Dr. Buchanan.

You have probably read them, and have been led to adore the distinguishing grace of God in placing you in a gospel land, as well as to shudder at the sanguinary delusions of heathen nations. Without Bibles, without a knowledge of the name of Jesus, millions are living in wretchedness, and dying on the funeral pile, or under the wheels of Hindoo idols. What a picture of human nature does this consideration present to our minds? Can it be possible that any will doubt the entire depravity of the heart, who give themselves time to reflect and enquire into the subject?

I am sometimes led to enquire what may be done by a private individual, as a means of sending the knowledge of salvation to those, who sit in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death. Great things are doing, at the present day, in this glorious cause by Missionaries, and by the translations of the scriptures. Would it not be an unspeakable privilege, if we might be allowed to assist in a work so divine? If the humblest office were assigned us, it would be an honor far beyond our deserts. My dear sister, will you give me your ideas on the subject, and

point out the way in which you think we might be most useful;—and above all will you pray that in all things my desire may be singly for the glory of God, in the salvation of sinners? Is it rational for us to live in ease, and enjoy so rich an abundance of spiritual privileges, while millions of our fellow-sinners are perishing for lack of vision, and attempt nothing for their relief? Well may all the heathen adopt the exclamation of the Hottentot christian, “ How could christians have so much bread and not give poor heathen some before ?” The heathen and the men of the world are a reproach to christians by their engagedness in their several objects of pursuit. Oh that we, and that all the dear household of Christ, might be awakened from the sleep of indifference, and be roused to vigorous, consistent, and holy energy in the service of Immanuel! Much may be done, but soon “the night will come, wherein no man can work.” O that we might by grace “redeem the time.” When I turn my eyes within, I am led to adopt the language of the Poet,

“ Fill’d with unbelief and sin,
Can I deem myself a child,”

The Apostle records this as a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom, he adds, I am chief. Could I be as humble as

the chief of sinners ought to be, could I deny myself and live solely for the glory of God, I think I should be happy; but alas! I am more vile, more brutish and ungrateful than any one, and cannot do the things which I know to be excellent, because of a sinful heart.— Can it be that we shall ever be made perfectly holy and be prepared to serve a Being of infinite perfection without the pollution of sin? The salvation of the gospel is a salvation from sin; not only from its curse, but from its pollution, its power, and its very being. This stamps an incalculable value upon it, and should lead us to desire it more than gold, yea more than much fine gold.

I often think of N. with affection, and hope she will at this early age be made willing to occupy Mary's place at the feet of Jesus; that she may be a humble and useful disciple.

Adieu,

Mary Morton,

In the following letter, Miss Morton alludes to the exercises of the Bedford Female Society. This was an Association formed at New Bedford as early as 1809. She drew up the Constitution. It was confined to professors of religion, and to persons of acknowledged piety. Their meetings were once a fortnight. Their exercises were prayer and reading the

scriptures. Three times a year the Society observed a day of Fasting and prayer. All the members in rotation were required to lead in the devotional exercises, unless particularly excused by the Society. Associations like this are formed in many of the New-England churches, where the life and power of religion is felt; and they have a tendency in an eminent degree to promote the spiritual improvement of those who attend them.

Freetown, — 1812.

To Miss B. M.

Dear Sister,

I feel with peculiar force your complaints of unfitness to engage in any Missionary services on account of unfaithfulness to those around you. Surely of all who profess the name of Christ I have the greatest reason to be abased before God, and also before my fellow creatures for the same criminal negligence. But if not deceived I do feel an anxious desire that the Heathen may be saved from the cruel pollutions of Paganism by the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Unworthy as we are to be employed in the lowest office in so great a work, what can we do but go to the all sufficient Fountain, for spiritual cleansing, and pray the gracious Master of the vine-

yard that he would accept such worms;—that he would inspire our hearts with such desires as he will graciously own and succeed, and make us feel our absolute dependence on him for all we have, and are, and all we hope to become. I am waiting for information from Mrs. N. on this interesting subject. I think she will suggest some method whereby pecuniary assistance may be obtained. But the method, to which you referred, of helping them by frequent supplication at the throne of grace, is of all others the most important, and I may say the most effectual. For all beings and events are under the absolute control of our heavenly Father. "He doth whatsoever he pleaseth in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." The silver and the gold are his. The winds and waves are at his command. By the sure word of prophecy we are encouraged to expect a glorious enlargement of Zion by the accession of the heathen nations, as well as the restoration of the ancient covenant people. It is the opinion of those, who are most favored with spiritual light and understanding, that we now see the dawning of that bright day which is predicted. Trusting then in the promises of truth, and fully assured of the infinite power of the gracious Promiser, may we not confidently trust, that the "light," which has appeared in the East, will cover the face of the

whole earth. O may our hearts be purified and prepared to glorify God on earth, and praise him through eternity in the heavenly Jerusalem.

You exactly express the feelings of my mind, my dear sister, with respect to active duty in our female meetings. I wished that the elder members might feel freedom and enlargement in prayer, and that I might be a hearer, rather than a speaker; yet I felt it a duty to be willing, if there appeared a call to it, to open my mouth in prayer. If not deceived I have enjoyed a blessing in it; though many harrassing suggestions would sometimes crowd my mind;—And there is none more common or more difficult to overcome than that with which you were assaulted—a fear of appearing too assuming. Indeed I was so perplexed in that way, that I mentioned it to several of the elder sisters in a secret manner; it was their opinion that it was a device of the adversary to keep me from duty; but I could never quite overcome it. Perhaps I was too forward and conducted unbecomingly to the grief of some dear sister. If so, may the offence be forgiven by infinite mercy. But as it respects the exercises of your mind on that subject, my sister, I cannot think there would be an appearance of the nature you fear. As you observe, we are associated for the purpose of social prayer,

wishing to plead the promise, "if two of you shall agree, as touching any thing ye shall ask, it shall be done for you." Each member is, I think, under an obligation to perform that duty; or, I might with more propriety say, is allowed the privilege of leading in social prayer. Nothing has a greater tendency to create and increase a freedom of soul in such seasons than that. We have our peculiar hindrances and difficulties; and each individual sister, without doubt, has something equally powerful which restrains her from coming forward, and thus we can trace the backwardness which grieves us to this cause. Is it not evidently one of Satan's devices? It would rejoice the hearts of your friends, should you find strength for the exercise, and it might be a means of opening the mouths of others.

I rejoice to hear that our number is enlarged and pray that our zeal, charity, love, and every grace may abound to the glory of God. I think it would be desirable that almost the whole time should be spent in supplication, and that every sister would in her turn present the united petitions of the whole.— I doubt not it would with a divine blessing exceedingly increase the sweet unity of soul which Christ's disciples ought ever to feel.— Without his presence, and the invigorating influence of the heavenly Comforter our

meetings must be unsatisfying to our souls. We may have the form of devotion, but it will be without life. May you be directed by the holy Spirit into all truth, and may every duty be made plain, and every cross easy to be borne.

Yours with sincere affection,

Mary Morton.

—
New-Bedford, — 1812.

To Miss L. F.

I was much gratified, my dear Louisa, by your account of the little society for assisting the Missionary cause. I approve of the plan of converting the fruits of female industry to a purpose so noble. You did not, I think, mention whether you unite in prayer for a blessing on your labours; but since some of the number are professed members of Christ, I trust you do. You will realize that nothing useful can be done without the special blessing of God, and for this he will be enquired of. Probably you have one to read while the others are employed in labor.—Would not some well selected books, in which the distinguishing doctrines of the cross are explained and exemplified, be peculiarly useful to the members of the society, whether they are professors or not. Those, who are

laboring for the means of sending the gospel to the heathen, which they have not themselves embraced, will, I hope, be led by it to a conviction of their own lost estate. Why are we anxious to send the tidings of salvation to the dark abodes of paganism? Is it because the human race are inevitably and eternally lost without it? Then we are in the same condemnation, unless we have received the Lord Jesus Christ, and must also perish with an unspeakable accumulation of guilt; for they may rise up in judgment and condemn many who have lived in christian lands. Still the prayer of faith, which none but the new born soul can offer, would be more successful, than the unsanctified labors of thousands. God can and does, in his sovereign pleasure, employ many to help his cause, who have no part nor lot with his people. In this way they are made useful, and they will "have their reward;" but not that gracious reward of eternal life, which is prepared for the followers of the Lamb. I believe there is an universal degree of concern for the heathen awakened in the hearts of all christians throughout the country, and many who do not profess to know Christ, have been led to contribute liberally to furnish the means of sending the gospel abroad through the earth. Must we not with admiration adopt the language of the "man after God's own heart," "what are we

that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort." He did not panegyrize the liberality of his people, but blessed the Lord and gave him the praise, not only for the means of offering for the building of the temple, but also for the disposition. An example highly worthy our imitation. Such sentiments are calculated to prevent self-complacency, and promote real gratitude to God. What are we that we are blessed with the full sunshine of gospel light and privileges, and not only made able but willing to do a little to assist in sending the same rich blessings to our perishing fellow sinners? Why rather are we not writhing under the huge car of Juggernaut, or ascending the funeral pile? Why are we not with Dives vainly soliciting a drop of water? The infinite grace of God alone prevents, and by that we are what we are.— Let us then lie abased before him, that we do so little, and be stirred up to more vigorous and self-denying exertions. Mrs. N. wrote a short time since, and observed that she had suggested the idea to her female friends, whether it would not be becoming the disciples of Jesus to appropriate the expense of golden ornaments and other superfluities in dress, to the support of Missionaries; and in that way they might better conform to the apostolic direction for the female wardrobe, "adorning themselves in modest apparel,—not

with broidered hair, or gold or pearls or costly array, but with good works." Were this inspired precept generally complied with, how much more lovely would the members of Christ's church appear, and what a sum might be saved for benevolent purposes. May the Lord bless and prosper your society and especially her whose heart was prepared to introduce and to promote it. May he graciously make each of you a fruitful branch of the True Vine, and may the blessing of many ready to perish come upon you.

With affection yours, &c.

Mary Morton.



In the year 1812 the subject of these memoirs was connected in marriage with the Rev. Elijah Dexter, of Plympton. A person of her pious disposition, devoted to the cause of God; unambitious of worldly distinction or of affluence, would naturally choose the situation of a clergyman's wife. It was a situation for which she was eminently qualified. Dignified in her manners, she always commanded respect. Affable in her address, and uncommonly amiable in her temper, she was calculated to exert more than ordinary influence in society. And her influence was always sacred to the cause of godliness. She was a crown to her husband, and a blessing to the parish.

In her Diary she notices her marriage with appropriate and pious reflexions. By this it appears that she acknowledged God in all her ways, and humbly sought divine direction and blessing. In her marriage she enjoyed as much happiness as ordinarily falls to the lot of humanity.

When she took leave of her parents, and removed to Plympton, she wrote the following letter, which is an interesting specimen of filial piety. When those to whom this letter was addressed shall cast their eyes upon it in this collection, they will perhaps peruse it with tears of gratitude, that they were once blessed with such a daughter; and with emotions of the deepest sorrow too, that the hand which wrote it is now in the grave.

Freetown, — 1812.

My very dear Father and Mother,

Under God I owe to you my existence and the innumerable blessings, with which I have been surrounded for more than twenty-seven years. Your tenderness watched over and protected my helpless infancy, and your care supplied the wants of childhood and youth. You have been unwearied in endeavours for my good, and by a divine blessing on the means you have used, I have succeeded thus far in life. I cannot leave you without attempting to express my feelings;—but the

language of the lips is denied me. My tongue cannot utter the emotions of my full heart. I beg you to accept my humble acknowledgement for all the perverseness and obstinacy of childhood, and the innumerable sins of my youth. O forgive every instance of ingratitude, and bury in oblivion every word or action, which has been stained with unkindness. I am pained with the recollection of my ungrateful returns for such exceeding kindness, as you have shown me. If not deceived I have endeavored to avoid intentional disobedience; but alas! how far have I been from that filial duty, which the holy law of God requires. Entreat for me that his pardon may be sealed to my soul by the precious blood of atonement. Accept the unfeigned gratitude of my heart for your unnumbered, continual, and unabating kindnesses. It is all I have to return. I never, never shall repay. But the Lord is able to reward you. I attempt to look to him for his blessing on your declining years, and for the never failing supports of his grace. May your last days be the most happy of your lives, and your path that of the just, which shineth brighter and brighter till the perfect day.

I now leave you to act in another sphere, where Providence appears to direct; and, though I leave you in declining health and

years, I hope you will never fail to receive necessary tenderness and attention. The thought of leaving you is indeed painful; but I hope I have not violated my duty to you in forming my present connexion. I trust you do not object to the friend of my choice. I have not knowingly contradicted your wishes; and I earnestly desire never to be a means of embittering a moment of your remaining days. 'Tis a pleasing circumstance that I am not to be remov'd far from you at present, unless it should be by death. But in earthly things there is no continuance, therefore we should ever feel as pilgrims continually journeying towards another country. If the Lord will, I hope to see you frequently while we continue in this mutable world.— May we all be prepared by the abounding grace of God in Christ Jesus to meet in another world at the right hand of our Judge to spend an eternity in his service.

When you need any thing in my power to afford, call on me with freedom, remembering that I am still your child, and should esteem it a privilege to be a means of adding any thing to your comfort, to make any returns for the vast debt of gratitude I owe you.

O may the grace of the Lord Jesus be abundantly poured out upon you.—May his presence give you comfort in life, triumph in

death, and consummate your blessedness in his heavenly kingdom.

Your affectionate daughter,

Mary Morton.



The following account of the revival in Plympton in 1812 is here inserted from one of Mrs. Dexter's Letters for the sake of bringing to the recollection of the present members of the Church in that place the spiritual blessings they have enjoyed in years that are past. Perhaps some who read this account may be induced to exclaim in view of their present state, how has the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed!

Plympton, — 1813.

To Miss L. F.

In my present place of residence, my dear L*****, the wonders of redeeming love have been manifested the season past, and the lovely fruits are still apparent, and I trust will remain, and will be recognized in the day when the Lord shall make up his jewels.— About sixty persons it is hoped have joined on the Lord's side. A considerable number of the dear youth were subjects of the work. I have heard them at different times relate before the church, what they trusted had been done for their souls, and their names are

now given in to be the Lord's. Young ladies, who a few months ago were first in attending to the calls of fashion and youthful folly, are now as I trust turned from vanity to the living God; appear to be mainly anxious to approve themselves unto him, and to be adorned with a meek and quiet spirit. It was interesting to hear them relate the work of the Holy Spirit on their hearts;—how they were brought to see their danger, to feel the amazing enmity, opposition, and vileness of their hearts; their entire helplessness and dependence on Jesus alone, not only for pardon, but for a disposition to receive it; and to feel their obdurate wills sweetly bowed, their load of guilt removed and their souls filled with heavenly peace. They now find unspeakably purer pleasure in attending the means of grace and gospel blessings, than this world could possibly afford. If it were right to indulge such a thought, I could wish that my dear L***** might have been present on some occasions to see and hear the mighty wonders which the grace of Jesus can perform.

How succeeds your little Missionary Society? Are the young in W. apparently seeking an interest in Jesus, or decorating and accomplishing the clay-formed casket, which contains the inestimable jewel, for which the whole world should be given in exchange?

O when shall we be wise to give our heart
to God, and live as becomes immortal beings.

Your friend,

Mary Dexter.



If any, who read the following letter, are disposed to think that the writer accuses herself with too much severity, and that the scripture quotations with the application are not always made with good taste, they may be reminded, that they had better turn christian, than critics ; and consider, whether the quotations are not descriptive of themselves. This letter was apparently written on the day of the monthly concert,

Plympton, — 1813.

To Miss B. M.

Dear Sister,

I have hardly dared of late to indulge myself freely in thinking of my New Bedford friends, lest I should feel a sinful impatience to see them. But I must not omit a favorable opportunity of writing, tho' I can by no means discharge the pleasing obligation which your last favor conferred. On this day multitudes, as we hope, of the daughters of Zion have assembled in different places to address their Savior and King, to entreat that he

would appear in his glory and multiply her converts as drops of morning dew ; that he would "strengthen her stakes and lengthen her cords," and let his own comeliness be put upon her. May their united prayers ascend as holy incense acceptable before God, and a gracious answer be vouchsafed. The object of the social prayer-meetings of this day, is peculiarly interesting, and calculated, perhaps more than any other, to engage the benevolent affections of the soul. I hope that all our sister Societies in this land will cordially and earnestly unite in this attempt to promote the glory of Zion's King. Ought we not to say of the dear Society whieh first proposed the plan, "Blessed be thou of the Lord and blessed be thine advice." I hope my beloved sisters in New Bedford have enjoyed a good season ;—have been fovored with fresh discoveries of the glory of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and have been allowed near access to the throne of grace to plead with holy boldness for its enlargement. O that I could see, that I could fcel as a believer ought, the momentous realities, the unspeakable glories of eternity. My dear B******, are you enabled to live daily with a realizing sense of God and eternity ? If you are, I entreat you will pray very earnestly for the unworthy guilty dust, who now addresses you.

You have probably heard that I have late-

ly been visited with sickness, and have experienced restoring mercy. The Lord brought me into danger, but did not give me over to death. He graciously blessed the means used for my recovery, and I was healed; and now surely I ought to feel "what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" I was scarcely, if at all, sensible of my danger, till my disorder began to yield to the power of medicine. When God gives efficacy to medicine, the most obstinate disorder must immediately give way. Perhaps I had never before so great reason to admire and adore the exceedingly kind providence of God.—Truly I have reason to say emphatically "he hath done all things well." With propriety may he look for suitable returns of gratitude and lively praise, for the entire devotedness of every power and faculty to his service; but alas, this is not to be found. I am unspeakably ungrateful. "Earthly, carnal, sensual, devilish," may be written on my heart. Such a heart as mine can never be prepared for heaven, but by the abounding grace of an all-sufficient Savior. It must be sovereign grace. It must be because the Lord has mercy on whom he will have mercy.

There will be a time when "the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." God

shall have the glory which is his due, and none shall dare exalt himself against the Most High. Is not the time drawing near, when Jesus shall take to himself his great power and reign till all shall be subjected unto him? It will be a joyful day to those who love his appearing, but a day of fearful vengeance to all his enemies. Why do we not think more of the solemn season so plainly predicted by the prophets, when the kingdom shall be given to the saints of the Most High, and when Jesus the mighty Conqueror, shall destroy those who fight against mount Zion? Surely the day will come and even draweth near.— Was there ever a time when it was more necessary for christians to be active? Events deeply interesting to the church are almost every day unfolding, and we know not what will be on the morrow. Sometimes when a little aroused to a sense of myself, I am filled with astonishment at my amazing stupidity; that I can be so insensible, when every thing is calling on me to “work while the day lasts, because the night cometh in which no man can work.”

Your unworthy friend,

Mary Dexter.

The following reflexions upon Milner's Church History deserve attention. They discover Mrs. Dexter's talent in making observations upon books, and her habit of converting what she read to her spiritual improvement. In a letter to a friend she observes.

Plympton, — 1814.
To Miss B. M.

Dear Sister,

By the indulgence of a friend we have been favored with the perusal of "Milner's Church History." I am exceedingly delighted with it. Shame and confusion of face almost overwhelm me, when reading of the fervent love, the holy zeal, the patient endurance of persecution and death, which the christians of the first century exhibited. Can it be that I have ever received the least spark of the same blessed spirit, when I am so entirely unlike them. Yet, if not deceived, my heart rejoices, that the religion of Christ has produced such unspeakably glorious fruit. Yes, it shall be seen, thou meek and lowly, yet highly exalted and glorious Savior, that thy death and sufferings, thine assension and intercession, have opened the way for the pardon and sanctification of the vilest slave of Satan. But language fails to describe the greatness of the salvation of the gospel. The joy is un-

speakable and full of glory, even an eternal weight of glory. I was struck with the force and propriety of one short expression of the pious Milner. "To believe, to suffer, to love, and not to write, was the primitive taste." If I may be allowed to hazard an opinion, I should say, that to read, write, and speculate, rather than to believe, suffer, and love, has been the modern taste. But doubtless the same love, which in times of persecution leads to a cheerful suffering of death, will, in times of toleration, induce a zealous use of the pen for the benefit of the church. The Lord has wisdom to use his people in a way to promote his own glory in the most effectual manner. "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."—He is crowned Lord of all and he shall reign till all enemies are subdued under his feet. O may we not be found among the enemies of his Cross, to be burned with unquenchable fire.

Your very unworthy sister,
Mary Dexter.



Plympton, — 1815.
To Mrs. N. N.

After the lapse of nearly half a year, I am seated to acknowledge the receipt of my dear sister's letter. Certainly if I am not much

deceived in myself, it is not because my affection for my friends decreases, that I have become so dilatory in writing ; but because it has pleased God to confine my hands to the care of a young immortal, whose little actions seem to say " mama, I have the best claim to your constant attention." It was some time after the birth of my son before my health was re-established, but I have since enjoyed unusually good health. O help me to praise the name of the Lord for his loving kindness and tender mercy. O pray for me that I may be in a measure faithful in this new relation in which his providence has called me to act. The care of a soul is an awfully solemn trust. How responsible a station is that of a parent ; and yet I am thoughtless and indifferent.

O that I had a heart to be truly grateful to God for his goodness in raising you and your son from the borders of the grave. It was distinguishing mercy, for you observed that others around you were cut down. Your reflexion that you are raised for some special purpose, is undoubtedly correct ; for had your work been then done, millions of angels could not have saved you from death. God's purpose concerning your earthly existence was not complete. I trust he has a great deal of good to do by you before you shall be removed to the church triumphant. There was a "needs

be" for your suffering an affliction so severe. Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit. I hope you are a bearing branch of that Vine, of which the Father is the husbandman; and he cannot mistake in his method of culture. The promise is infallible that all things shall "work together for good to them that love him and are the called according to his purpose."— Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. All his works are righteous and his ways are past finding out.

Does the flame of Missionary zeal burn as brightly now as it has formerly done, or do national calamities, and the delays which our dear missionaries have experienced, serve to depress it? For my own part, I must say that the divine dealings with them have convinced me more than ever, that they are to be used in doing a great work. Their trials, which have been severe, are evidently preparatory to the more successful prosecution of their mission. How gloriously the grace of Christ shines in them, while they are passing thro' the furnace? Have we not evidence to convince us that God has been with them of a truth, and has given them favor in the sight of those in authority; and has furnished them with a mouth and wisdom which none of their adversaries have been able to resist. American christians must not cease to contribute for

building the Temple in heathen lands on account of the pressure of national calamities. They may not be able to do so much. But in the present season of fluctuation in business, and of speculation, the treasury of the Lord seems to be the only place of security for wealth.

We thank you for your friendly invitation to visit you. Such an excursion would be very gratifying; but in the present state of our family it would be quite impracticable. Permit us to reciprocate the same wish.— Mrs. L., the sister whose name you have mentioned to me in your letters, has friends residing in this region, whom she occasionally visits. How happy I should be if you would accompany her, and make our house the principal place of your visit. My remembrance to your daughter, and to Mrs. G.

Yours affectionately,

Mary Dexter.



Freetown, — 1815.

To Miss B. M.

My dear sister perceives that I make very poor returns for her kindness in writing to me. But I shall commend myself to her forgiving disposition without taking time for a lengthy apology. I have not long since re-

ceived from the hands of God a precious treasure; a lovely, promising son; and have the care of an immortal soul committed to my trust. "What shall I render to my God for all his kindness?" How shall I discharge the important duties devolved on me? We have publicly, and I hope sincerely and unreservedly, dedicated our infant charge to him from whom we received him. O that it may please the good Shepherd to receive him as a lamb into his arms—to make him truly one of his own, prepared to promote his glory.

Have you not, my dear sister, been exceedingly refreshed by the last report of the American Board of Commissioners? Our dear missionary brethren and sisters have been severely tried; and how wonderfully the wisdom and grace of God are displayed in it. How wonderfully they have been furnished with wisdom, prudence and courage to act as becometh the ministers of Jesus Christ.—These trials will more fully establish their characters—make them more extensively known and excite the greater interest in their favor.

I am extremely short-sighted. When they were obliged by the Bengal government to leave Calcutta without a prospect of effecting the first object of their benevolent design, I had fears that the American churches might

not be permitted to share in the blessed privilege of sending the gospel to the heathen. But I am now convinced that God will descend to accept the service at our hands.— He well knows our infinite unworthiness of so great a blessing ; but I think his providential dealings with our dear brethren in the East carry full conviction, that they are designed as instruments of great good to the perishing idolaters of India. The serious difficulties which the war between this country and England occasioned, will now be removed, never, I hope, to return. Does not the heart of my dear sister glow with lively gratitude to the Author of every gift, that we are allowed again to enjoy the sweets of national peace ? O let us magnify the Lord and exalt his name together for this unexpected, undeserved favor. My foreboding mind was looking forward with dread to the bloody scenes of another campaign, and could see no prospect of returning peace ; when, behold, the olive branch again visits our shore. Is there now any thing to prevent the perfect union and co-operation of christians in England and America in the great work of sending the gospel to every creature under heaven ? Doubtless it was in answer to the prayers of God's people on both sides the Atlantic, that we were blessed with returning peace. I know of no obstruction now to prevent Amer-

ican christians from gratifying the most extensive benevolence of their hearts. The whole world is before them ; a large majority of its inhabitants are destitute of the " Words of eternal life," and Christ has commanded that the gospel should be preached to every creature. Blessed be his name that he is raising up some from among our brethren and sisters, and filling their souls with a holy zeal to fulfill this benevolent command. Shall we now sit down in criminal supineness, while others are entering into the fields already whitened for the harvest ? Oh no, it shall not be so ; for the same Spirit, which is influencing the hearts of European christians to forsake all to proclaim the name of Jesus in heathen lands, and has called some of our dear brothers and sisters to the same self-denying work, will still operate, and many more shall be prepared and sent forth.

How greatly should I rejoice to see you, my dear sister. I should rejoice if Providence should lead you to visit Plympton.— May it not yet be so ? I will still hope it may, and while we are separate I will solicit a frequency of letters. Kindly remember me to dear Bedford friends, particularly to Mrs. H. and daughter ; and every dear sister in the female meeting.

Have you, my dear sister, ever seen Kicherer's account of his mission in the South of

Africa? I have recently sent to Boston, but could not obtain it. It is a most affecting and interesting little pamphlet, particularly the conversation of the three converted Hottentots, who accompanied him to England, with the Missionary Society. If you have ever seen it I presume it was as a feast of fat things to your soul.

Your unworthy, affectionate sister,
Mary Dexter.



Plympton, — 1816.
To Miss B. M.

Dear Sister,

Your acquaintance with me, my dear sister, must have led you to observe that slothfulness is a sin which easily besets me. Its influence is most pernicious in spiritual concerns; but extends to all the actions of my life. Were it not for this, I might have much time to devote to reading, and often enjoy the privilege of writing to my dear correspondents. But it is now very seldom the case that I can command an hour free from company or some necessary domestic duty. I hope I may never be suffered to repine, that God has required active duties. It is certainly proper that we should "labor, working with our hands;" not to amass riches, or

gratify a worldly spirit, but that we may have to give to him that needeth. I find much reason to be dissatisfied with myself that I do so little; and that little, with a temper of heart so improper. Would it not be pleasant to labor, could we do it with a desire to "redeem the time," and do something for God?

How much I should rejoice to welcome my dear sister in P.; to introduce you to some of our dear brothers and sisters, whose real, christian excellence ought highly to be valued, though unattended with those accomplishments which a deceitful world calls engaging. My husband would also be much gratified with a visit from you, and I would teach my prattling babe to love a friend so dear to his mama. To us he is quite an interesting child; but alas, he is an enemy to God, and I am not suitably affected with the melancholly truth. O that it may please God to spare him, and prepare him for some humble employment in the vineyard of the Lord.

I hope for an opportunity of conveying this and several other worthless letters by Mr. H****. My dear sister will prize the blessing she enjoys of sitting under his ministry. Is it not very evident that he is remarkably assisted and blessed of the Lord? While he is enabled to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, his labor will not be in vain in the Lord.

I feel a pleasing confidence that that little church to which you belong is established on the Rock of ages, and that no weapon formed against her shall prosper. Amidst surrounding mists of error, she is established to display the light of truth, like a city set on a hill which cannot be hid. O may every member be enabled to walk as a child of light. Perhaps there are but few christians placed in circumstances so favorable for doing good, as those in your church. Their temper and conduct, as far as can be seen by mortal eyes, are very much observed, and if agreeable to the gospel, will have a great effect. It is a very happy thing when christians are enabled by well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. O may it never be found that the advocates for *free-will* in any of its modifications, excel the professors of evangelical principles, in the practice of holiness. O may that dear church, for which I still feel a peculiar regard, produce many brothers of like spirit with Brainerd, Newell, &c; and sisters, whose piety and missionary zeal shall equal those dear female worthies, whose lives are published for an example to us.

I cannot give a very flattering answer to your kind enquiry respecting our female meeting. The members of the meeting are considerably numerous, yet our meetings are generally very small. I trust however that

we find it good to meet, even if there are but "two or three." I long for the privilege of meeting with you once more at New Bedford. Has our friend H. P. joined the female meeting? Has she yet been disposed to profess Christ before the world? I hope she may be made an eminent example of the power of divine grace. Remember me to her if you please. Has my dear young friend, Miss A., been made willing to receive eternal life through Jesus Christ? My love to her and other friends.—Respectful regard to your father.

Your affectionate sister,
Mary Dexter.



Plympton, — 1816.
To Miss H. P.

Has God preserved my dear sister H***** from the ravages of pestilence? If you had been called to join the congregation of the dead, surely some kind friend would have informed me of the affecting event. I shall therefore address you as still an inhabitant of this dying world. How much longer it may thus be said of us, God only knows. Our times are in his hands. The bounds of our habitation are fixed, and beyond them we cannot pass. Our work is appointed, and

must be completed, before we drop the body. But when the time of our departure arrives, "an angel's arm can't snatch us from the grave," or give us power to live a moment longer. The prevalence of disease and death is calculated to make us realize that we too must die and enter the world of spirits. I hope my very dear sister is enabled to feel, that she is but a pilgrim here, and that the time is short ; that she must do quickly, what is to be done. Alas, it is not so with me. For a short time, while those on every side are sickening and dying, I seem to feel in some measure the uncertainty and brevity of my own life ; but quickly forget the solemn truth, and live as if this world were my home. O for an abiding, lively sense of the vanity of the world and the amazing weight of eternal realities. Such a sense would regulate our affections properly, and prevent an inordinate attachment to created good.

The dear delights of friendship can be but momentary in this world ; and, were it not for the anticipation of their continuance beyond the grave, would not be of much value. But when we consider the nature, foundation, and duration of christian friendship, we perceive a value in it, far beyond any mere earthly comfort. Those who are united to Jesus, and to each other by the indissoluble bond of holy love, will experience only a short

interruption at death; and will again be united in another, better world; and their joys will be sealed with the stamp of eternity.

Is the strong affection which has existed between us ever since our first acquaintance of this exalted, holy kind? As it respects myself, I dare not answer confidently that it is. Yet at some times, I have a hope that we shall be made meet, by the almighty arm of grace, to unite forever in the blessed employments of those, who are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. With shame and blushing I must confess that my general deportment and feelings of heart are entirely inconsistent with such a hope. Jesus saves his people from their sins; and, if I am one of his people, why am I not delivered from sin?

A few months since there were with us some hopeful appearances of a revival. Several were alarmed, some of whom obtained hopes, and give striking evidence, that they have passed from death to life. Others returned to a state of carelessness. At present there is no general attention to religion, though I hope there are a few individuals, who feel that they are in an evil case. Death has lately been commissioned to remove our acquaintances in quick succession into the eternal world. Many are clad in the garments of mourning, and I have a hope that

God will sanctify his dealings to the living, and make them feel the necessity of immediate preparation for death. Do my dear Hannah, visit us soon. How very much I long to see you. May God bless you and keep you, and show you much of his glory.

Your unworthy sister,
Mary Morton.



The following extract from a letter to her friend in Hollowell is in her usual spirit, whenever she descants upon the subject of Missions.

Plympton, — 1817.
To Mrs. N. N.

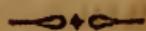
You see, my dear sister, how much I have written, and have not yet adverted to the astonishing displays of divine power and grace with which the earth is illumined. O how I should rejoice to converse with you on the pleasing theme. In imagination we would make the tour of the world, calling at the different Missionary stations, and learning how the Lord is making bare his arm for the salvation of the heathen—from the frozen climes of Iceland and Russia to the burning plains of Africa and Asia. Among the millions of idolaters we should discover the glorious light of truth beaming with heavenly radiance from the different missionary stations. But

the subject is absolutely boundless. You doubtless have access to the various periodical works whose object it is to diffuse light and information respecting the various triumphs of Zion's King. I am ashamed that I feel so little and do so little at this blessed day, when God is evidently rising in his glory to build up Zion.

I have scarcely ever been more interested by any providential circumstance of the like nature, than in the case of the little captive Osage Indian, and the price of her redemption being offered. Has my friend, Mrs. G., yet enlisted under the Captain of our salvation? Has your amiable daughter given her heart, her all to Jesus, and taken him for her everlasting portion? Remember me to them if you please, and say the "time is short when they who are righteous will be righteous still."

With affection yours,

Mary Dexter.



Freetown, — 1818.

To Mrs. F. C.

My dear and highly valued friends, I have for some time been hoping that Providence might open some door for Mr. Dexter or myself to visit you; but as I see no present pros-

pect of it I have recourse to the pen. We truly sympathize with you in all the chastisements of our heavenly Father's hand. We too have been called to taste the cup of sorrow. I deserve to drink the very dregs, and to lie down in hopeless, everlasting woe. Yet God is graciously bestowing innumerable mercies, and we are living witnesses for him, that he is good to the evil and unthankful.— In October last we were called to bury another infant son. God has loaned us three. Two are already removed, but the first born is still spared. His ways are righteous, holy, just, and good. May we learn wisdom by every chastisement of his gracious hand.

May it not be said of every individual believer, "I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction?" Had I sufficient evidence that I belong to the family of Christ, I think these things would not much move me; but to have a heart so little affected with the glories of the divine character and government,—to be so little engaged in the astonishing displays of divine grace, with which the world is filled—surely that is cause of grief; that is sufficient to overwhelm with conscious guilt and shame.

I have no doubt but you rejoice and praise God for the wonders which he is doing by the instrumentality of the missionaries of the cross. God is evidently now saying to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not

back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. Ethiopia is stretching out her hands unto God ; the isles are waiting for his law. Some heathen nations are burning their idols, and are crying to the zealous missionary, "Come and teach us the knowledge of the true God." Even on poor benighted Burmah, and the immense population of China, is the light of divine truth beginning to dawn. Christ is beginning to take to himself his great power, and to reign over those who have long sat in the darkness of paganism. The heathen are his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth shall be his possession.

I have recently heard that you are enjoying a shower of divine grace, O may it continue and increase, till a very great army shall be raised up for the service of Immanuel our King. Were I among the number of the true and faithful; could I be concerned for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and yet so much swallowed up in my own little wants and woes ? I think I do sincerely rejoice when I hear of revivals of religion ; but alas, my heart, if at all engaged, is not sufficiently engrossed in the all-important concern.

As it respects us in P. we have abundant cause for "lamentation, mourning, and woe." Iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes

gold. I fear we have provoked the blessed Spirit to withdraw and leave us to barrenness and desolation. I sometimes feel almost entirely discouraged. But I trust there are at least a few who sigh and cry for the abominations which prevail; and I have some hope that we shall witness the fulfilment of this scripture, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." O do remember us and let our church have a deep share in your petitions. In the place from which I write, hateful errors abound, and have apparently almost choked the seed of divine truth. There are but very few, who hold the faith once delivered to the saints. I wish some Missionary society would compassionate this dessolate spot. Should a missionary of the right stamp be sent to labor here, much good might be done, and some souls now lost in the maze of error might be brought into the light and liberty of the gospel.

I take the liberty to addres this letter to you all, rather than to write three separate letters. May the peace of God which passes all understanding fill your hearts. Mr. D. wishes a remembrance.

Your unworthy sister,
Mary Dexter.

Plympton, — 1818.

To Miss B. M.

My very dear Sister,

If the worthlessness of my letters might be considered a sufficient apology for my long silence, I should need no other. But when I observe by my memorandum that it is more than twelve months since I have written to one of the dearest of my friends, I can but reproach myself as guilty of ungrateful neglect. I think, if I am not deceived, that I have often experienced a peculiar blessing in the perusal of your letters. They are a precious cordial, the excellencies of which I cannot well describe. This expression of my feeling will, I fear, seem like flattery; but nothing is farther from my intention.

I have heard of the wonders of a wonder-working God in the region about you; and even among your own society. Contrasting the situation of N. B. and the towns on each side of it, with what it was some fifteen or twenty years ago, some conception may be obtained of the astonishing displays of sovereign grace. Surely it is a place highly favored of the Lord. May each of his children there be enabled to render to him according to benefits received. From a Vineyard so highly cultivated, much fruit may be reasonably expected; and I doubt

not but a rich revenue of praise arises from that favored spot, perfumed with much incense.

No doubt your heart has been cheered and exhilarated by the perusal of the last report of the American Board. What nobleness in designing and wisdom in executing are there displayed. I am led to say respecting each of the establishments under their patronage, "What hath God wrought?" Whether we turn our eyes to the eastern or western Heathen, we discover the leadings of divine Providence and the peculiar blessing of the Lord on our dearly beloved missionaries,—the love of Christ constraining them, and the grace of Christ supporting them. We have abundant reason to be satisfied with the instruments, which God has chosen to "bear his name among the gentiles." They appear to possess an apostolic spirit, and to be eminently devoted to the blessed work, under the influence of a zeal according to knowledge.—We know who it is from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. Every grace and qualification of the most distinguished missionary is from him who received gifts for men. "Of him, and to him, and through him are all things; to whom be glory forever." Every crown will be cast at his feet, and the glory of what has been done, as well as what has been enjoyed, will be ascribed to him. O may we

here enjoy something of the blessedness of those who have departed to be with Christ, in beholding the luminous displays of his grace in the Church. It is but an emanation from the infinite excellence of his nature, which makes our dear missionary brethren so interesting and lovely. They, as well as every other believer, are beautiful through the comeliness which he puts on them. This idea is illustrated by Dr. Watts, speaking in the name of the Church.

“ Though in ourselves deformed we are,
And black as Kedar’s tents appear ;
Yet when we put thy beauties on,
Fair as the courts of Solomon.”

O my dear sister, may we be constantly enabled to behold him by an eye of faith, as the Alpha and Omega to his church ; the blessed Vine from whose infinite fulness every branch derives all its beauty, verdure, and fruitfulness ; and may we love the branches for his sake.

Among the names of very many dear faithful missionaries, that of Mr. Brainerd will ever hold a distinguished place. We gave it to our last infant son, the same we were called to relinquish after it had been but a few hours in our fond arms. We besought the good Shepherd to sanctify its polluted na-

ture, and receive it into his arms to some humble place amid the innumerable company which surround the throne of God and the Lamb. If it had been spared, I should have desired no greater blessing for it, than that it should have been like him whose name we gave it; and in its death I could ask no more, than that it might be prepared for the same blessed society.

I trust, my dear sister, that you have enjoyment in divine things, though you probably suffer much from feeble health. I feel anxious to hear how you are. I do really wish much to see you here. You might do good, if you received none. There is abundant need of christian exertion among us. We are very, very far from what we ought to be. Unhallowed feelings corrode the breasts of brothers and sisters; and I sometimes fear that we have nearly arrived at that state of which the Apostle speaks; "all seek their own and not the things of Jesus Christ." It is painfully evident that some of the disciples of Jesus have forgotten their first love; and are apparently less concerned for his glory than for their own private interest. We stand in perishing need of heavenly showers of grace. O that we may be deeply humbled on account of our sinful departure from the right ways of the Lord.

Be so kind as to remember me to dear

friends—I shall endeavor to write to A*** by the next conveyance. I ought to have answered her acceptable letter before.

Your unworthy sister,
Mary Dexter.



Plympton, — 1819.
To Miss B. M.

On this consecrated evening while the friends of Immanuel in every quarter of the globe are bowing the knee and supplicating for blessings on a ruined world, I feel an invincible desire to write a few lines to that dearly beloved sister whose affections are so much engaged in the blessed cause. When I reflect on your situation—on my own—on the loss I shall sustain if spared longer in the world, my heart is full to overflowing, and I have reason to fear that your feeble frame will scarce endure to hear my letter read.— Ever since your increased illness, I have indulged, a hope, that I should again see your face in the flesh. I do still hope so—though I wish to feel entirely submissive, and say “thy will be done.” I feel a desire to express to you my dear sister, once more before you leave the church below, the tenderness and strength of my affection for you. I feel that I have reason to bless God for the privilege

of your friendship—and am sensible that I ought not to wish to detain you longer in a sinful world, at a distance from our Heavenly Father's house, when Jesus seems to be manifesting his pleasure that you should soon be with him where he is, to behold his glory.— But I cannot avoid feeling the loss with keen sensibility. I hope God will so order it in his providence, that those friends who enjoy the privilege of visiting you in your gradual descent into the valley of the shadow of death, will inform me how the Lord is dealing with you, and with what views you are favored, while on the confines of glory. But I doubt not that the Lord will manifest his glory to your view and graciously sustain your sinking frame. O he is infinitely able, full of grace and truth. While flesh and heart are failing I doubt not you are enabled to say, 'God is the strength of my heart and will be my portion forever.' I trust he will be with you in the final conflict, and will make you more than a conqueror through him who hath loved you and washed you in his own precious blood. May Christ enable you to show forth his praise until your voice be lost in death. Is not your heart ravished with the prospect, while only anticipating an entrance into the blessed society above, where all is joy, and love, and praise; where the sun of righteousness displays the effulgence of

his glory ? You have lived to see the dawning and advance of the Millennial day, a day of wonders in the kingdom of grace ; and are allowed to hope in the redemption purchased with the blood of the Lamb. You are enabled to say—"O to grace how great a debtor ;" and to ascribe all the glory, for the blessings you have enjoyed, or hope to enjoy, to sovereign grace.

O my dear, dear sister, may an abundant entrance be administered to you, into the presence of him who filleth Heaven with his glory. Accept my kindest thanks for all your sisterly regard, and every expression of your faithful love. May the Lord Jesus enable you to lean constantly on his compassionate bosom, and when called to be absent from the body may you "breathe your life out sweetly there." For a short season I must say,

Adieu,

Mary Dexter.



Plympton, — 1819.

To Miss B. M.

My ever dear sister,

By the kindness of our friend Mr. H***** I learned more particularly the state of your health and other circumstances, than I have ever before been able to obtain, since

the first information of your illness. I would endeavor to bless God for his great goodness to you, and pray that his presence may continually surround you until you sleep in Jesus and awake in his likeness. The faithfulness of Jehovah is engaged for your complete redemption. On that you rely as on an immoveable rock, against which the hosts of hell shall never prevail. I trust you enjoy refreshing and glorious views of eternal realities, and will be enabled to shew forth his loving-kindness, while "life and breath remain." You have often occasion to rejoice in the wonderful displays of sovereign grace, in the many powerful revivals of religion which are prevailing. In this region the people of God have strong hopes that the Lord is about to appear in his glory to build up Zion. Appearances have certainly never been so encouraging since I have resided here as at present. Among Mr. P's parishioners about two miles from us a very considerable degree of solemnity is evinced; and in other parts of his society the same is evident.— Some have given evidence of a gracious change. I hope I do long for Christ's spiritual appearing; and yet I often fear that I am the very Achan that prevents or retards it. Search me, O God and try me, and make me to know myself. Beyond a doubt the friends of God in this place are pleading very ear-

nestly with him that he would speedily arise and plead his own cause, and make his enemies submit themselves unto him. O may not our iniquities provoke him to leave us as the barren heath in the desert, which does not see when good cometh. I hope, my dearest sister, you will live to rejoice in another revival of religion around you, the glory of which shall far surpass all that you have ever witnessed.

Until the receipt of Mr. H's letter, I was in a state of uncertainty whether you would be able to read my letters, or were able to hear them read, if I should write. I have therefore refrained from writing many times when my feelings strongly urged it. Though conscious that my barren letters can afford little satisfaction to one on the confines of eternal beatitude, yet it is to me a sweet satisfaction to write to a sister so tenderly beloved, whose friendship I consider as one of the greatest blessings of my life. Our mutual friend assured me of what I presumed before, that you had no expectation of recovery. I fear that I am unreconciled to the prospect of your leaving us. But it is not on your account, I believe it will be far better for you to be absent from the body, as I trust you will then be present with the Lord.

May you be sustained by the almighty arm of Jehovah under all the weakness and

distress through which you may be called before you enter the eternal world.

With unabating affection, your unworthy sister,

Mary Dexter.



Plympton, — 1819,

To Miss S. F. C.

My dear sister,

It would greatly rejoice me to visit you personally instead of sending this letter by my husband. But providence seems to hedge up the way, and I ought to rejoice in it. I think I wish to derive benefit from all the events through which I am called to pass, and to rejoice when my own will is crossed. You probably enjoy the privilege of seeing our dear departing sister Mayhew. Earnestly do I long to see her once more while remaining in the body; to receive her dying counsel, and witness the consolations of God which abound in her. Prize the blessing, my dear S****, and may it be a means of your more rapid advance in the christian race. When Dea. B. visited here I fully purposed to have written you; but a variety of demands on my time prevented. I am not now able to write to your dear mother separately, but beg that

she will accept a share in this. Your family are repeatedly bereaved. God sees fit in his infinite wisdom to exercise some of his dear children with a larger share of affliction than others. But shall we on that account impeach his benevolence, or doubt his love to us? Surely not. "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." He is infinitely lovely in taking as well as in bestowing blessings.

We doubt not you have now another sister in heaven. Though we mourn her departure, we have abundant cause of thanksgiving that she has left such a testimony to the power and grace of the gospel. Her warfare is accomplished, while we remain "pilgrims in this barren land."

Experience has taught me to feel a tender sympathy in Mrs. T's. loss of her babe. I hope God will make it up in the abundant communications of his love. To do this he is infinitely able, for he is the omnipotent Jehovah, rich in mercy to all that call upon him.

You have probably heard much more respecting the wonderful displays of divine grace in S***, W***, and the "region round about," than I have been able to learn, and have glorified God on that account. Without doubt we live in such a day of wonders as has never before been witnessed by the

church. God is wonderfully appearing, to have mercy on Zion, by stirring up the hearts of his people every where to devise liberal things. The gospel is spreading in almost every nation and kingdom. The important enquiry with respect to ourselves ought to be, Are we personally interested in the great salvation; and, What would the Lord have us to do in this day of Zion's enlargement? Undoubtedly the daughters, as well as the sons, have something to do to promote her interests. What may we do in the sphere of action, which God has marked out for female believers? May we have wisdom from above to understand our duty, and persevering grace to perform it even to the end. I long to see you and your dear mother. How much we should be gratified to see you both here. We hope we begin to awake from our slumbers, and we believe that some are enabled to cry in faith, "Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause." Within a few days past we have seen a display of divine power in bringing down the stout heart. A few months ago Mr. — appeared in the front rank of opposition to God and to his people. Now he trembles in view of the wrath to come, and asks those whom he has cruelly slandered to visit him and to pray for him. Such power belongeth unto God. We hope the Lord intends to make him a trophy of his victorious

grace. For some time past the enemies have opened their mouths wide in opposing the cause of God. They have recently reproached the friends of Christ, by saying, " You are trying to have a reformation, but you will not succeed, except it may be with some few silly women." But we think that some have been enabled to spread that reproach before the Lord, as Hezekiah did the blasphemous letter of Rabshakah ; and we hope the God of grace will vindicate his own glory. You recollect Mr. B. who used to reside at _____. He this day related to us the way in which the Lord had shown him the exceeding sinfulness of his heart, his exposure to eternal despair, and opened to his mind the way of salvation. I scarcely ever heard a more affecting relation and prayer. He gives very clear evidence of being a subject of divine grace. O may such be multiplied among us as drops of morning dew.

Your affectionate sister,

Mary Dexter.



The following is the last letter addressed to Miss Mayhew, a young lady of New-Bedford, a favorite correspondent of Mrs. Dexter. Shortly after this Miss M. was num-

bered with the dead ; and her spirit we humbly trust was gathered to the spirits of the just.

Plympton, — 1819.

To Miss B. M.

My very dear Sister,

I have just heard that you have not yet joined the church triumphant, and as Mr. H. has assured me that my letters do not injure your feeble frame, I feel a very strong inclination to write you a few lines. If we were indulged with the privilege of a personal interview, and your strength could endure it, how much we might say concerning the mighty wonders of grace which are displaying in almost every quarter of the world. If you are able to hear the accounts contained in the Herald and Recorder, your soul is often filled with praise. Who that is acquainted with the great events which are constantly unfolding, can doubt but that the King of Kings is on his way to take the kingdom?— Sometimes I do indulge a hope that my heart rejoices in his approach. But conscious guilt sinks my spirits, and makes me tremble. I will not however grieve your benevolent heart by the tale of my exceeding sinfulness.

Our dear devoted missionary brethren continue to give us abundant evidence that they are called of God, and qualified by his grace

for their arduous, important work. Their equally devoted wives claim also a large share of our affection. Were the understanding of the heathen illuminated to discern the excellence of their spirit and characters, they would behold in them a lovely transcript of the heavenly religion, which they inculcate. The time will come when the heathen shall see and feel the influence of the gospel. They will be constrained to cast away their idols to the moles and bats, and to relinquish their foolish, indecent abominations. The word has gone forth, "He shall have the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;" and shall it return void? Surely not. Nor can we suppose that he, who is wonderful in counsel, would qualify and incline so many of his sons and daughters, to leave their native land and go forth to proclaim the gospel among the heathen, unless there was work of grace to be performed through their instrumentality. In God's own appointed time, the heathen shall be gathered into the fold of Christ.—Thrice happy are they who cheerfully assist in forwarding the blessed work. I think it must give you satisfaction to see the society, which has so much engaged your feelings and exertions, shooting forth so many "Branches." Did you anticipate, at its commencement, that in six years, the "Heathen's Friend"

would receive seven additional Branches in adjoining Towns? May God give every member fourfold zeal.

May the gracious Lord, to whom you are consecrated, grant you abundant consolations till you shall be received into the general assembly of the just made perfect.

Adieu, my dearly beloved friend,

Mary Dexter.



The following short letter shows how desirous Mrs. Dexter was to do good on every occasion. It was a few lines, accompanying a small number of religious Tracts, put into the hands of one of the members of the church in Plympton upon her commencing a journey.

Lord's Day, September 28th, 1820.

To Mrs. S. T.

My very dear Sister,

I find that my heart cleaves to you, and will I trust follow you in your intended journey. O may you constantly enjoy the presence of Christ, and the transforming views of his lovely character, which the Holy Spirit gives to those who follow him fully. Our time is short and very soon we shall be called

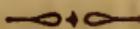
to stand before the great white throne and "pass the solemn test." I entreat your prayers for me, most vile and hateful, that I may be prepared then to appear in the perfect righteousness of Immanuel, to be with him where he is and to behold his glory. If a heart 'o pray be given me, I certainly shall remember you.

Our dear church at this time appears so overspread with sins and iniquities, that I am filled with discouragement and am almost ready to fear the awful denunciation of him, who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." I have thought more of late that I may be the Achan in the camp, for whose cause others are left to stray; and that the Lord of the vineyard is about to remove me as a noxious branch, so that the remaining branches may again flourish in gospel purity.

His wisdom is infinite,—O that my soul may rejoice in this precious word, "my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Though that counsel should consign me a vile, ungrateful, unbelieving wretch to the blackness of darkness for ever, yet it will be wise and holy, just and good. Holy beings will rejoice in it, and sinful ones too will be under eternal obligations to love and rejoice in the government of God, because his government will be just and good and righteous forever and ever.

I have, my dear sister, put up a few Tracts together with the valuable letters of Mrs. O. thinking they might agreeably occupy a leisure hour in your journey, or help you to drop a word in season by which some soul might be eternally benefited. I trust those among whom you may go will be constrained to take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus. May his gracious providence lead you out and return you home in peace and safety.

Your affectionate unworthy sister,
Mary Dexter.



The two following letters were addressed to young ladies who had been Mrs. Dexter's pupils. The advice they contain, while it discovers the writer's solicitude for the immortal welfare of her pupils, is equally applicable to other young persons of the same age.

Plympton, — 1820.
Misses S. M. C. and C. T.

Accept my thanks, my dear pupils, for your expressions of gratitude. Your attention and improvement during the quarter now closing have been highly gratifying. You will not, I trust, relinquish the pursuit of knowledge with your emancipation from

scholastic duties. Much improvement of the mind may be acquired amidst the duties of active life. You have successfully entered the paths of knowledge, and I hope you will be induced to continue the pursuit, until your minds shall be richly stored with useful knowledge. Mental cultivation, especially when sanctified by divine grace, gives dignity to the female character; while superficial accomplishments and trifling levity degrade the possessor and disgust the refined and judicious observer.

Reading well chosen books, reflection, the habit of clothing your ideas in words, epistolary writing, all will be beneficial in the developement and cultivation of your minds.— But these solid, useful accomplishments should not be sought for their own sake solely; but only as a qualification for greater usefulness, and in subordination to the interests of eternity. The glory of God, the salvation of souls, is of infinitely greater importance than every thing else which can be named. You will allow me, therefore, my dear young friends, now we are about to separate, renewedly to press this “one thing needful” upon your thoughts. It demands immediate attention. The testimony of God’s word, confirmed by the voice of conscience, tells us that by nature we are children of wrath even as others. Born under the law, we are exposed to its

penalty and nothing can save us from its infliction but deep repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. However amiable our natural dispositions, however unexceptionable our external deportment may be, yet if we love not the Lord Jesus, we are exposed to the awful anathema of him who cannot lie.— God has made us rational creatures, and has informed us also that we are accountable to him for our conduct. He has commanded us to love him with all the heart; and has assured us that in so doing we shall not only enjoy inexpressible peace at present, but shall hereafter be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And because we are fallen and undone, there is a glorious Savior provided, who is both able and willing to save all who come unto God through him. The Holy Spirit is also commissioned to reprove of sin, righteousness, and judgment, to arouse us from the slumbers of spiritual death. What more can be done to save us than has been done? And now, my dear young friends, shall we perish amidst all this rich profusion of grace? Shall we force our way to destruction through all these barriers of mercy? O no! Do let us attend immediately and earnestly to this momentous concern. Let us not delay to a "convenient season;" for that may never come, if we neglect the present. If we refuse to hear while God is calling he may say

of us, "Let them alone; my Spirit shall no longer strive with them."

To one of my two young friends, whom I now address, I would say, since you have professed to be a disciple of Christ, "Be not conformed to this world," but let your conversation be in heaven, that others may be won by your example, while they behold your "chaste conversation coupled with fear." Wherein you may have departed from the directions and example of your great Master in heaven, pray earnestly that you may be forgiven, and not be the means of leading others to continue in the way, which leads to the chambers of death eternal.

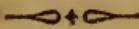
To the other I would affectionately say, give your heart to God. Now in your youth engage in the service of Christ. If you do so in sincerity, you will find him a glorious Master and a gracious Savior, every way qualified to make you happy, not only here, but forever. In him all fulness dwells; all power in heaven and on earth is committed to his hands. He can do every thing, which such guilty, lost creatures need to have done. His precious blood has been shed for the redemption of souls, and he is exalted to be a Prince and a Savior to give repentance and remission of sins. Will you not, my dearly beloved pupil, accept of him as your Savior and Redeemer? There is joy and peace in

believing. There is solid enjoyment in the ways of religion here ; there is support, consolation, and triumph in the awful hour of death ; there is beyond the grave joy unspeakable and full of glory.

May God abundantly bless you both. May he give you grace to improve every qualification and advantage you possess to the glory of God, and the benefit of your fellow creatures ; and when you and I shall meet at the bar of the Judge of all, may it be with joy and triumph, and may we be eternally united in the service of God in the realms of glory.

Yours affectionately,

Mary Dexter.



Plympton, — 1821.

To Miss S. M. C.

I acknowledge with gratitude the receipt of two affectionate letters from my dear S****. The first was a long time on its passage. The last was received in due time by the hand of sister D. ; but, as I was absent from home, your request for an answer could not then be complied with. Your affectionate enquiries respecting my present religious enjoyment demand a grateful return. A disclosure of the truth on the subject must pain you ; but

I will not attempt to deceive by affecting an engagedness which my heart does not feel.— God looketh on the heart; and I cannot be unconscious that his infinitely pure eyes behold innumerable abominations, of which my fellow-creatures never suspect me. If we are enabled to repair daily to the “fountain of cleansing,” we may be purified from the inexpressible pollution and guilt of sin. Why are we naturally so averse to bathing in that blood, which cleanseth from all sin? Is it because we love independence, and would prefer to deliver ourselves from the snare of the fowler? A life of faith, if I have a correct view of the subject, is a life of absolute dependence on another; not for one thing alone, but for every thing. To me it is undeniably evident that a Savior less than the “Fellow and Equal” of the Lord Almighty would be entirely inadequate to the necessities of ruined, self-destroyed sinners. Let us then, my dear young sister, prize more highly a precious and exalted Savior. Let us endeavor to live more by faith in his name, more to his glory, by consecrating every faculty to his service. If we do not feel it in our daily experience, our understandings tell us that his service is perfect freedom, his yoke easy, and his burden light. We know that too much cannot be done to honor him, who is worthy of infinite honor. Why do not all

who bear the christian name, particularly those who believe in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to produce the zeal and activity of christians ;—why do we not all arise with one heart to do the will of God and show forth his praise ? While overwhelmed with the painful perception of our own deadness and unprofitableness in the Lord's vineyard, we may yet rejoice, my dear, that Christ has not left himself without witness in his church, that his grace is all-conquering and all-sufficient. To those who point the finger of scorn at such lifeless unprofitable professors as you and I, and with too much reason make the taunting enquiry, "What do ye more than others ? we may with humble confidence say, "Read the lives of a Brainerd, a Vanderkemp, a Buchanan, a Martyn, and a Mills, with many female worthies of kindred spirits, and you may see the influence of true religion, when it shines with its intrinsic lustre." Every instance of the power of divine grace, exemplified in the holy life of any christian, ought not only to excite in us a desire to be like-minded, but to fill us with gratitude to him, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. Every beam of light, emanating from his infinite fulness on this dark world, should be considered an undeserved favor, demanding a suitable return of love.

By Mrs. H. we learn that you are engaged

in imparting instruction to the children around you. May you be enabled to discharge faithfully the high trust reposed in you.— You have seen the example of an unfaithful teacher; and will you, my dear, endeavor to improve by the failures you could but observe during the last season. I hope you may be made instrumental of making impressions on the minds of the dear children, which may endure through eternity. Remember me to Miss H. and remind her of the obligation she ought to feel on account of healing mercy and spared life.

The ladies in P. are furnished with articles for the formation of a Society, and are already organized; so that there will be no necessity for your feeling any further anxiety on the subject. We have begun in Plympton after thinking long on the subject, to prepare clothing, &c. for the children of the forest.— For so early a beginning we are remarkably blessed in the undertaking. Write as often as consistent, and believe me your

Affectionate friend.

Mary Dexter.



The concluding letters in the series are addressed to family connexions. The expostulations contained in some of them are plain,

but they are such as fraternal affection will cheerfully excuse.

Plympton, — 1821.

To Mrs. C. M.

My dear Sister,

Since hearing of my brother's illness by Mrs. S., I have felt an unusual anxiety about you and the dear children. I feel a deep sympathy in the painful solicitude you must have felt during the progress of his disorder, and hope you have been supported under the trial by him, whose "tender mercies are over all his works." We had not heard from him or from his family since I came from Free-town about the middle of Feb. until the last Sabbath, and knew not but that all my dear relatives were in usual health. But a fearful presentiment had fixed on my mind that some of my friends were sick. I trust he is quite recovered before now, and indulge the pleasing expectation that he will be returned to you in safety after the close of his public business. O that God may sanctify the frequent sicknesses, which he has been called to endure, for the benefit of his soul. It is in itself a pleasing consideration that my brother is favored with the confidence of his fellow-citizens, and enjoys a considerable share of worldly prosperity; but a heart-rending fear sometimes oppresses me, that his atten-

tion will be diverted from things of eternal moment. Frequent sickness and repeated bereavements admonish loudly, that there is no durable enjoyment in this world, nothing on which we can with safety lean for happiness. And what are the enjoyments which the wealth, applause, and honors of this world afford? Does the possession of them leave no unsatisfied desire? Are they sufficient to support the soul amid the terrors of dissolving nature?

In relation to my dear brother and sister and each member of their family one earnest desire predominates in my heart;—that they may be convinced of the guilt and danger of a state of enmity against God, may flee to Jesus and trust in him as an all-sufficient Savior, and may cordially consecrate themselves to his service.

My dear sister will not think me unkind, if I endeavor earnestly to pray for this. Could I have evidence of this, my heart would overflow with joy—for I should then have the assurance that those, who are bound to my heart by the strong ties of natural affection, were engaged in the most noble employments of which they were capable, and were preparing to spend a happy eternity in the presence of our God. We feel desirous to hear from you, and if you will have the goodness to leave a line with your brother a few days

hence, Mr. C. will call and take it directly to me.

Your affectionate sister,

Mary Dexter.



In the following letter the writer alludes to the principles of the Unitarians,—principles which, it is well known, prevail in many parts of New England, where once a purer doctrine was professed without any dissenting voice.

Plympton, — 1821.

To Mrs C. M.

When I received your welcome letter, my dear sister, the prospect of my having a convenient conveyance for an answer the next week appeared promising.—But Mr. C. has been delaying his visit from week to week until now. Your situation with regard to religious privileges must excite the most tender commiseration in the hearts of all, who feel the value of such privileges in any measure. Yet while I deeply lament the painful trial to which you are thus early called, I do rejoice that you feel such things to be a trial.— Were you gratified and happy in the plans and prospects of the Society in T. in their present circumstances, grief would almost

overwhelm me. I should greatly fear you were given up to "strong delusions." Better is it to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the delusive vagaries of unsanctified reason for a little season. We have, my dear sister, solemnly, and I hope sincerely avouched the Lord God of Hosts to be our God; the Lord Jesus Christ to be our only Savior; and the Holy Ghost to be our only Sanctifier. Virtually, if not explicitly, we have engaged to govern our faith and practice by the oracles of God. Is there no meaning in this most solemn transaction? Are we now at liberty to deny the authority of the law and to impugn the character of the Law-giver? O may we shudder at the impious thought; and may we always feel the most tender compassion for those, who are left to act such a sinful part.

There are undoubtedly many points of difference in religious sentiment, which do not affect the vital principle of piety. But the doctrines to which you have of late been obliged to listen, we must say from the most careful attention to the Bible, are not of this description. There must be a fundamental difference. If the views we have fondly cherished as the life and joy of our souls, be in reality those which God reveals, the opposite connot be christianity. You have, I doubt not, often shuddered at the temerity discover-

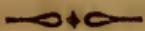
ed by many in explaining away, and as it were annihilating the most momentous gospel truths; and have been melted into compassion for them, when reading the solemn, awful denunciations of Jesus and his Apostles respecting such characters.

My husband heard yesterday that Mr. — had given an affirmative reply to the invitation to settle in T. It is what I expected to hear. For some time there has appeared to me very little hope that your church would be favored with what we esteem a gospel minister. Believing as we do that the most High governs all things after the counsel of his own will, we have the highest reason to believe that there is a holy and wise design in this as well as in all events. May we be enabled to exercise entire submission, while we mourn that Christ should be disregarded and dishonored, and souls be deceived to their eternal ruin. It is a very important point of christian duty to feel the preciousness of the truths on which our all depends; to love them as our life, and yet at all times to cherish proper feelings towards those who oppose and reproach. But this is the duty which is binding upon all, who love the Lord Jesus. When the exercise of grace prevails, it is easy to do so. O may those who are the real disciples of Christ among you in this day of peculiar trial be enabled to manifest

the excellence of the Spirit of Christ. While earnestly maintaining the purity of divine truth, may it be done with the meekness and gentleness of him whom they love. Much injury is oftentimes done to the best of all causes by a wrong spirit in its defence.

You and my brother are, I have reason to believe, very affectionately remembered by some in this place, who, though not honored with the world's applause, will be forever as "kings and priests unto God." Their prayers I hope may be answered with abundant blessings on your souls, and on your family. You may conceive that I have felt no small degree of satisfaction in hearing that my brother gives no suffrage to Unitarianism. That must be considered as one of those errors, with which we have no fellowship.—May the precious, powerful truths of God's word which have become the salvation of an "innumerable multitude," be made the "sword of the Spirit," and the life of his soul.

Your affectionate sister,
Mary Dexter.



The two following letters were written by Mrs. Dexter to her brother at Washington, while a member of Congress.

Plympton, — 1813.

To M. M. Esq.

My dear Brother,

I must begin with an apology for delaying so long to answer your kind letters of January last. I have become unaccountably remiss in using the pen; and, though I have designed almost every mail to write you, it has still been neglected. Accept my very grateful acknowledgements for your fraternal generosity. For what passed "some ten or twelve years ago" I pretend to no claim; and you will allow me to receive your enclosure as a kind and acceptable present. Both your letters were received without loss or delay. I hope you may be amply rewarded in your own bosom for every act of kindness.

A few weeks since I spent several days in your family, and can give you a very pleasing account of the uncommonly good conduct of your dear little daughters.—They appeared exceedingly affectionate and obedient to their mama, and pleasant to one another. Their papa's much-wished return was a subject of frequent conversation and eager anticipation. I begin to know the heart of a parent, and can therefore conceive that it will give you great satisfaction to know that your children conduct with propriety. They now give pleasing promise of future loveliness. May

they long be spared to comfort and delight the hearts of their parents, and be fitted by an early participation of divine grace for eminent usefulness in the world. In an adjoining town a great mortality now prevails among children. One family of my acquaintance are called to deposit three lovely children in one grave. Many others are dead and dying. We have been taught, my dear brother, to know something of the bitterness of their sorrows. O may we receive instruction from such painful dispensations, and never despise the chastening of the Lord.

It was truly gratifying to hear that you had so valuable a man for a room companion as I conceive Mr. S. to be. Certainly, my dear brother, those whose duty it is to make laws for a nation should have a sense of their accountability to the God of nations, and should feel a cordial subjection to the great eternal Lawgiver. However highly any one may be exalted in worldly honor, faith in the Lord Jesus and obedience to his authority, would be infinitely more honorable. It is not the spirit of fanaticism, but a sincere desire for your highest interest and your noblest exaltation, which induces me thus to write. I covet for you that honor which cometh from God, even the favor of the "King of Kings." I wish to know that you have accepted the gospel invitation to a more august assembly

than the most splendid levees of earthly potentates; even that of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. My heart's desire is that you may have an interest in the everlasting treasures of Christ's righteousness, and use your influence in promoting the cause of God on earth.

After your return, I realy hope you will find an early opportunity to visit Plympton with Mrs. M. To us it would be very gratifying. Accept the affectionate and respectful regard of our whole family, particularly of your sister,

Mary Dexter.

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Plympton, — 1821.

To M. M., Esq.

Intelligence of the sickness and death of several Members of Congress during the winter has increased my anxiety about my beloved brother. And though I have omitted writing till near the close of the Session, insensibility respecting your welfare has not occasioned the neglect. My sleeping and waking thoughts often visit you, and often do I regret that I have not been more explicit with you respecting your views and prospects for eternity. I would humbly confess my criminal backwardness in conversing with

you on a subject of all others the most important. I do endeavor to pray that the want of christian faithfulness, and christian example, which you have observed in me, may not be a means of leading you to slight the religion of the gospel. Its importance, excellence, and glory are amply delineated by the pen of inspiration. In the volume of God's word, my dear brother, you may learn the spirit and tendency of the religion of Christ. There too we are reminded how wretched and guilty we all are, while strangers to its transforming power.

The goodness of God has been remarkably displayed towards you, my dear brother.— Surely nothing short of an almighty hand could have raised you from an illness so exceedingly dangerous. Every circumstance connected with your recovery, however trivial it might appear to some, I consider as the result of infinite wisdom and goodness, embraced in God's design of mercy. Never did I on your account experience sensations so exceedingly distressing as in that awful moment, when you were to human appearance just on the verge of eternity. How would the bitterness of that hour have been changed into sweet composure by an evidence of your preparation for an "incorruptible inheritance." I reflected on the temporal blessings which had crowned your life, and demanded

a return of gratitude and praise. You had been blessed with superior endowments of mind, with the confidence and suffrages of your fellow-citizens, and had been placed in very responsible situations. You had from the first dawn of reason been allowed the privilege of God's word, and the offers of the gospel.— If these and unnumbered other advantages had all been regarded only with a selfish view ;—If you had continued in the neglect of the divine requirements,—had practically refused the Savior of sinners—and had sought only your own interest in opposition to the glory of God, amidst so many means of grace, O what an account must be given at the bar of him, who is a “God of judgment, by whom actions are weighed.” My dear brother, be not angry with me for suggesting these solemn reflections to your mind at this time.— God is witness how tenderly I regard your welfare. Respect for many amiable qualities which I rejoice to see in you mingles with the fondness of sisterly affection. But whatever be our natural advantages, and acquired excellences ; however beloved and honored by our fellow-creatures—without being born of the Spirit, and being led by the Spirit, we shall never find the gates of heaven open for our reception. I hope the mind of my dear and highly respected brother is not a stranger to reflexions on the momentous subject of relig-

ion. But I am ignorant of all that passes in your thoughts on the subject. I can assure you that many hearts would be made glad to see you become a humble believer in the Lord Jesus, accounting it your highest honor to sit at his feet and hear his word. Such a temper and conduct more truly ennobles, than all the fading honors of this transitory world. In some measure I feel that I am less than all, and unworthy to introduce the subject to you; but we are hastening into eternity. Our state as well as characters will soon be unalterably fixed; and then, if never before, we shall feel the weight of these truths. May God in infinite mercy renew the heart of my dear, dear brother, and qualify him by his grace for usefulness in the world in a higher and more important sense, than any man in a state of nature can possibly be. Forgive me, my dear brother, if I have appeared assuming, or have written any thing inconsistent with the deference I owe you.

I have great hopes that your life will be spared till you return to your friends, though others are taken from your number.

Your obliged affectionate sister,
Mary Dexter.

We here close Mrs. Dexter's epistolary correspondence. In the latter part of her life she wrote but few letters to her friends. Her health was impaired; some of her correspondents had gone before her to the world of spirits; others had removed to remote parts of the country, and her familiarity with them by time and distance had insensibly diminished. Those with whom she was most intimate in the latter years of her life were persons of piety in the place of her residence. Her intercourse with them was such as gave no occasion for the interchange of letters.—There was no necessity for her committing to writing the pious effusions of her heart in the form of letters, when she had opportunity to meet every week with her christian friends for religious conversation and social prayer.

Her death was preceded by sickness of nearly two years continuance; attended however by intervals, in which she enjoyed comparative health, and faint hopes of recovery. When her health first declined, she labored under deep depression of mind. To the evil

of sin in the sight of God, and to her own deficiencies as a christian her sensibility was always extreme. Throughout her whole life indeed she seldom evinced much of lively christian joy. She was not melancholy.— Whatever some may imagine of the tendency of her religious sentiments to inspire gloom, this was not their influence upon her mind. Melancholly constituted no part of her character. She was habitually cheerful ; she always met her christian friends with the smile of joy on her countenance. Still it does not appear by her letters, nor by any of her compositions, that she was often the subject of transporting emotions of religious joy, or was highly favored with the grace of assurance. Tranquil hope in the Redeemer, rather than assurance ; cheerfulness, rather than joy, marked her christian course.

When her health began to decline, she was sensible that her departure was approaching. For nearly two years before her death she was habitually impressed with the persuasion that her time was short. She appeared to have the presentiment that she should be cut off in the midst of her days, and be consigned to an early grave. When asked why she indulged these thoughts, she replied that a latent disease was gradually wasting her frame. Whether she was realy a prey to any latent constitutional infirmity or not, her fears were

realized by the event; and, when death actually approached, she was not unprepared to encounter its terrors.

For some time after the beginning of her decline she was deprived of the sensible consolations of religion. She may be said at this time to have walked in darkness, and to have seen no light. If we seek for natural causes of this mental depression, we may attribute it to that fear of death to which the most pious are not always superior, and to that grief which a tender parent feels at the thought of leaving her young children in a degenerate world without a mother's counsel to guide or care to protect them. It was a season in which the feelings of human nature triumphed over the exercises of grace,—a season when hope and confidence in God seemed to have forsaken her, because they were not equal to the severity of her trials. She complained of darkness. She was deprived of that joy and peace in believing, with which she had been favored in past years. Perhaps this was designed by him, who hath promised that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to make her more humble; more devout; more submissive; and thus prepare her for more sensible consolation, when actually on the confines of eternity. It appears to have been the last conflict with the powers of darkness *anticipated*; for

after this she enjoyed the light of God's countenance with very little interruption; and finally departed filled with hope of eternal life.

Her decline can scarcely be called gradual, for she was for several months in so low a state as to be in almost daily expectation of dissolution. This occurred nealy a year before her death. During this distressing sickness her mind was at rest. Though constrained to consider herself on the confines of eternity, her heart was fixed on God her Savior; her faith and hope were unimpaired. To the surprize of herself and of all her friends she partially recovered from this sickness, so as to be able to bestow some attention upon her domestic duties. Yet she was never restored to health. She was at times able to superintend her family affairs; to converse cheerfully with her friends; and occasionally to enjoy the comfort of a short ride. Still disease was making a slow and silent progress to bring her to the house appointed for all the living, and grace was preparing her for a better world.

When partially restored, and when most free from pain, she enjoyed the least of consolation in spiritual communion with God. Having experienced most signal mercy from God in her partial restoration, her sensitive mind was filled with fears, that she should not

render unto the Lord according to his benefits ; nor praise him with that ardor of affection, which his goodness demanded. She was at this time often heard to reproach herself for ingratitude to God ; and to mourn over her insensibility to divine goodness.— The health of her mind appears to have been a contrast to the health of her body. When most distressed by sickness she was most tranquil and submissive ; and enjoyed most sensibly the consolations of religion.

All who attended her during her last sickness were witnesses of her ardent piety. Her conversation was eminently in heaven. She entertained, for most of the time, not the most distant hope of recovery, and with her christian visitors she frequently conversed upon her death as near at hand. Her own departure was a topic upon which she discoursed so frequently, that the thought of death became familiar to her mind.

She observed one day to a friend,—one with whom she had frequently associated in christian fellowship,—‘ Sister C., I hope my christian friends will never lavish any praises upon me after I am gone. If you say any thing of me to any one, say that I am a poor, undone, miserable sinner ; dependent on the blood of Christ alone for the pardon of innumerable transgressions. If I am ever saved it will be entirely through the sove-

‘reign grace of God abounding to the chief
‘of sinners.’

On another occasion the same lady observed to Mrs. Dexter, ‘I hope you will enjoy ‘peace in your last hours, and have a triumph- ‘ant death, and entrance into heaven.’ ‘O, ‘said she, tell me not of a triumphant death. ‘I know not that such a sinner as I am ought ‘to wish for a triumphant death. All I de- ‘sire is to enjoy a delightful view of the Sav- ‘ior, and to commend my departing spirit in- ‘to his hands. I feel surprized that such a ‘sinner as I am should have any discoveries ‘of a Savior made to me,—such a glorious ‘Savior, an Almighty Savior, one infinitely ‘able to redeem my soul from sin and raise ‘me to the heavenly world.’

She was frequently visited during her long and distressing sickness by her christian friends, and there were not a few of her visitors, whom she requested to pray with her.— Witnessing her extreme bodily sufferings with tender sympathy, they frequently supplicated for her recovery, and prayed that God would mitigate her distresses. This she had noticed, and observed one day, ‘that her christian friends must not pray so much as they had done for her recovery, and relief from bodily distresses. She wished them rather to pray that God would endue her with more submission, more patience; and make her

‘willing to be any thing or nothing, as God
‘should ordain ; and especially that he would
‘enable her to glorify God by patient sub-
‘mission to all he should require her to en-
‘dure.’

Mrs. Dexter in her sickness, and while receiving the visits of her christian friends, who met to sympathize and to pray with her, was still intent upon doing good. She frequently and pathetically urged the members of the church in Plympton to be active and zealous in the cause of God, and to continue instant in prayer for spiritual blessings. She urged them never to be weary in well-doing ; never to neglect any duty, the recollection of which would give them painful reflections, when they came to die. ‘Tell them from me,’ said she to one with whom she was most intimate, ‘charge them from me, as from a dying friend, especially the sisters of the church, ‘never to bring reproach upon their profession ; but by a meek and humble deportment, by a devout and holy life, to recommend to the world the religion of the gospel.’

During her residence at Plympton Mrs. Dexter had persuaded the female professors of religion to attend stated meetings for prayer and other religious duties among themselves. She was punctual in attending herself, and frequently led in their devotions.

In her last sickness, recollecting without doubt the happy hours she had spent at these female prayermeetings, she urged it upon those who had attended them never to neglect them. She left with them her dying charge to be more spiritual, more devotional, and more constant than they had been in their attendance.

When her christian friends attended her in her sickness, as watchers, she sometimes requested them in the course of the night to pray with her. Mrs. C., sitting by her bedside after all others in the house had retired to rest, was requested by Mrs. Dexter to join with her in this exercise. 'It may be,' said she, 'we shall never have another opportunity of praying together in this world.' After the exercise was concluded she exclaimed, 'What a privilege it is that we can come to the throne of grace and make known all our wants to our merciful Father in heaven.'

The same lady was at another time watching with her. After enjoying a little repose in sleep, she awoke, and articulated in a faint voice, gathering strength as she proceeded, 'I shall see the Savior, shall I not, sister C? O yes, I shall see him as he is. This is the promise, I shall see all his excellence, all his glory in the world of spirits, to which I shall shortly go.' At this time she was supposed to be upon the borders of eternity; and

it appears by this and other incidents that Christ and heaven were in all her thoughts.

In her last sickness she was sometimes raised into transporting emotions of joy in contemplating the glory of the Savior. She expressed one day to her husband a fervent desire to depart and be with Christ. 'You will not think it strange,' said she 'that I wish to leave you that I may be with him to behold his glory. God has given us much domestic happiness since our connexion, and I have as much attachment to you as one human being ought to cherish toward another. I love my two little sons,—none but a parent knows how dear they are to a mother's heart; and I feel for you in your many afflictions; but God will support you. I know he will. I believe he will make your children a comfort to you by "calling them by his grace." Still you cannot think it strange that I love the Lord Jesus more than any earthly friend, and that I wish to leave you that I may be with him. I see the Lord Jesus in his beauty and glory as I have never beheld him before.—I long to be with him.' This she uttered, says my informant, with an eye sparkling with intelligence, and a countenance glowing with love. Mrs. Dexter had spent years in mourning over the depravity of her heart, and reproaching herself for sins, which none but herself would ever have imputed to her,

She was now reaping the fruit of her godly sorrow in a rich harvest of consolation and spiritual joy. It was consolation amidst the anguish of dissolving nature ; it was joy in the God of her salvation, an earnest of heaven in her soul.

In the course of the summer preceding her death, she requested the privilege of once more partaking at the communion table with her brethren and sisters in the Lord. Her wishes were gratified. The church attended, and the service was performed at her house. It was a season of uncommon interest to herself and others. All the communicants testified to the ardor of her devotion, when celebrating this festival of love. She found however that the exercise was too much for her feeble frame to support ; and she thought it prudent afterward to deny herself this mode of communing with her Savior.

For several months she lingered on the confines of life, sometimes too feeble to converse except with her "family" and her Savior ; at other times freely conversing with any of her friends on subjects most interesting to a dying christian. She appeared always resigned ; tho' her sufferings were severe, she never expressed impatience or complaint. Christ to her was all in all. On the ninth of Oct. 1822, her departing spirit, we trust, was received by her gracious Redeemer.

The character of Mrs. Dexter may be collected from the letters contained in this volume. In them she appears fully to have disclosed her views of the doctrines of Redemption, and the feelings of her own heart without disguise. Her conversation upon religious subjects corresponded to what she wrote in familiar letters to her friends. Her general deportment was consistent with her professions. She may with truth be said to have maintained the character of a consistent christian.

She was a *devotional* christian. The meditations she has recorded in her journal prove that she was not a stranger to her closet; and she possessed that knowledge of the plague of her heart, which can be acquired only by frequent self-examination in retirement, and in prayer before God.

She was distinguished for *humility*. This christian grace shone with peculiar lustre in her character.—She scarce dared to think herself pious; and attributed to every one, in whom any evidence of grace appeared, a greater degree of piety than she thought she possessed herself. She strictly complied with the maxim, “let each esteem other better than himself.” Possessed of a humble opinion of her own attainments in religion, she was grieved rather than gratified with hearing any commendation of her piety. ‘Let my friends’ said she on her death bed, ‘speak of me only ‘as a lost, and undone sinner, saved; if ever saved, by ‘grace alone, and never lavish any praises upon me ‘after I am laid in the dust,’—an injunction with which they find it difficult to comply.

She was an *engaged* christian. It was evident to all acquainted with her, that God was in all her thoughts, and that she aimed habitually to serve and please him. In no conversation did she delight so much as in that which related to the honor of the Redeemer, and the salvation of immortal souls. Intelligence of a sinner brought to repentance, or of a revival of religion in

any of the churches, was refreshing to her soul. Whenever it was her province in company to lead in conversation, with unassuming modesty and winning affability she would introduce some serious and instructive topic of discourse, adapted to lead the minds of the company to meditate upon Christ and the wonders of redeeming love. Whenever she had pupils under her care, she was no less concerned for their immortal welfare, than for their improvement in the common branches of education. She was careful to make those impressions upon the youthful mind which had a rational tendency to advance their happiness in eternity, as well as promote their respectability in the world. She entertained a high opinion of her responsibility as an instructor of youth, and she endeavored to discharge the duty of christian fidelity. When her pupils left her, she followed them with her pious counsels and her prayers.

She entertained a high opinion of female prayer-meetings. While she was engaged in Middleborough as Preceptress of the Academy, she persuaded the female professors, especially the young ladies in that place who were pious, to form a society, and hold stated meetings for prayer and other religious exercises by themselves. She exerted her influence however in a manner so unassuming as scarcely to be known or noticed in what she did. In their assemblies she always chose for herself the lowest seat. If she discovered that the members placed dependence upon her to conduct the exercises, she would not indeed decline the duty, but so managed as to persuade them all that their gifts were greater than hers. While she was herself the life of the society, she prevailed upon every one, however timid, to take an active part in the exercises of their meetings; and would always have them esteem her inferior to themselves.

In other places also she engaged with equal ardor in forming similar associations for prayer. In Plympt-

ton especially she supported a praying circle among the female professors; and exerted her influence to maintain the life and power of religion in the church. We presume the professors of religion in that place will all testify, that her influence was not without effect. They will long remember with what earnestness she pressed it upon them to be watchful and prayerful, and zealous in the cause of Christ.

Her engagedness in religion did not all evaporate in lamentations respecting the coldness of professors, nor spend itself in reproaches, or in censorious reviling of christians for being stupid, and lifeless, and formal in religious duties. If she reproached any one, it was always herself. She had more fear of discovering that she had been herself the Judas of the company, the Achan in the camp, than concern to fix that stigma upon the character of another. It appears by many of her letters that she was too sensible of her own imperfections, too humble in her own estimation, to be severe or acrimonious in her censures. She condemned none but herself.

In the cause of Missions she was peculiarly interested. This was a favorite theme in her letters to her friends. In every instance of success attending the American Missions among the heathen she rejoiced, as if receiving the reward of her own labors, or an answer to her own prayers. She was happily calculated to persuade others to aid the missionary cause. She was so mild in her address that none could be offended, tho' she urged them to bestow their much loved treasure. She was not so much engaged however in soliciting donations for the missions, as in persuading her friends to form societies for this object.— In this respect her labors were crowned with a blessing. The "Heathen's Friend" Societies were the fruit of her influence. Her agency was scarcely visible, yet she was under providence the primary cause of the existence of them all.

The last labors of her life were devoted to this object. She had requested her christian friends in Plympton to send a box of clothing to the Missionaries. The donations were collected at her house.— When she had disposed of her own worldly cares, had set her house in order, and lived only in expectation of her departure, it was her employment to make up clothing for the children of the forest at the mission schools. Tho' unable to sit in a chair, she could recline on her pillow, and assist it making some small garments for the Indian children. This employment was a gratification to her benevolent heart. This incident proves that love to the missionary cause, and a desire to do good, was in her like "a ruling passion, strong in death."

Mrs. Dexter's charitable sympathies were not excited merely by the wants of the heathen in Hindostan, nor did she make garments for the children of the forest, while the wants of the poor in her own neighborhood were neglected. Her heart was moved by distress, wherever it met her eye. The cause of the poor around her she searched out; and with the charitable donation in her hand she oft repaired to their humble abode. She was never rich, of course she could never give much; but she gave according to her ability; and when the gratitude of the poor was excited by her bounty, she improved the happy moment to suggest some faithful admonition, and serious advice; and if the poor were in any special affliction or in sickness, she would kneel by their bed-side, and in prayer commend them to the mercy of God.

Her character as a wife and a mother also deserves commendation. To say that her conduct in these relations was exemplary is but faint praise. Her prudence and economy in domestic affairs were such as became one in her station, with an income merely sufficient to meet the current expenses of a family and furnish an occasional gratuity to the poor, or con-

tribution to the treasury of the Lord. She was economical from principle, but without parsimony.

She was the happy parent of several children, two of whom survived her. Only one of them was of sufficient age to be benefitted by maternal instruction; but he will long remember, we presume, with what assiduity his deceased mother labored to instill into his mind all that was valuable in human knowledge, adapted to his tender years; and above all to inspire him with the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom. She labored to teach him the first principles of the oracles of God, and her instructions were accompanied with many fervent prayers for his conversion in early life, for his usefulness and happiness in this world, as well as for his salvation.

She shone especially as a minister's wife. Those who are acquainted with the manners and customs of New-England, especially in the country towns, will readily concede, that the station of a clergyman's wife is one of peculiar responsibility. The deference which is usually paid her gives her extensive influence, and she may be a useful counsellor to the anxious enquirer, especially of her own sex. In times of attention or revival her friendly visits to the thoughtful, the enquiring, or to those who are rejoicing in hope, may be attended with most salutary effects. If she be pious and discrete, and be familiarly acquainted with the elementary doctrines of the gospel, she may often answer enquiries, comfort the feeble-minded, and communicate instruction without that magisterial gravity, which is repulsive, and with that condescending affability, which at once invites to confidence and persuades to piety. By her influence also she may repress those extravagances in young converts, which bring discredit upon true religion, and by a word in season make impressions upon the susceptible mind, the effects of which will be felt in eternity.

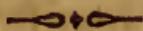
Mrs. Dexter was qualified for this station; and she

exerted her talents for usefulness as Providence furnished opportunity. To what extent her labors were blessed in giving pertinent advice, and seasonable instruction will appear in the disclosures of a future day. We trust there are some in Plympton and other places, who will rise up at the day of Judgment and call her blessed.

In parish controversies and dissensions respecting religion a clergyman's wife may be called to act, not a conspicuous, but a useful part. Her province at such times is not to give counsel, or prescribe measures for others to pursue, but by her example to recommend evangelical religion,—by her gentle and humble and heavenly deportment toward opponents to conciliate their esteem. Mrs. Dexter was qualified to act this part. While her unaffected piety, and gentle yet dignified demeanor, made her family circle the delight of her husband, and pleasant to all their visitors, she conciliated the esteem and respect of the parishioners; and their esteem for her and her family contributed much to facilitate their friendly reception of the word of truth; and to induce them to aid in supporting the gospel. She was a peace-maker, not by any direct influence, much less by craft and management, but by being without design, open, candid, gentle, calming dissension by her meekness, and her talent to attract esteem. On this account many in Plympton have reason to lament her loss. They have not indeed been insensible of her worth; and if the grief of her husband could have been alleviated by sympathy, his sorrows were lightened at her death, for he had many to share his regrets and his tears.

Her death was a loss to society. But death was gain to her. She sleeps in Jesus. Hers is the promise of a glorious resurrection. "*Them that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him.*"

A
SERMON,
DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL
OF
MRS. MARY DEXTER:
AT PLYMPTON,
OCTOBER, 11, 1822.



BY SYLVESTER HOLMES,
Pastor of the Congregational Church in
NEW BEDFORD.



SERMON.

“Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.”—Job 19, 21.

After all the distinctions among men, formed by climate, education, and other circumstances, a strong resemblance is manifest in the formation of their bodies and in the construction of their minds. Every man bears about with him indelible marks of his relation to one common parent, consequently that he is a brother to the whole human family. It was intended that friendly intercourse should prevail throughout this extensive fraternity; and that all should exercise the same care one of another.

Man was formed for society, and not to be indifferent to the joys and misfortunes of others. The duty of weeping with them that weep, and of rejoicing with them that rejoice, arises from the relation he sustains to them. Benevolence should induce him to participate in the joys of his neighbor's prosperity, tenderness and pity of heart should

influence him to make the sorrows of another his own. "Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity as being yourselves also in the body."

The man who can look, with tearless eye and an unfeeling heart, on the sorrows of other men, exhibits one strong mark of depravity. He is "Without natural affection." Such monsters of adamantine hardness are found, who appear to be lost to all sensibility, and void of every feeling of humanity. The man of affliction may as well expect the rocks to weep at his grief as to find sympathy in such characters.

Yet there are men of better feelings; men who have been recovered in a measure, by grace, from the direful effects of the fall.—These, addressed in the moving language of the text, bear an interested part in the trials of other men.

The sentiment of the passage to be considered is the following—When the hand of God in affliction rests upon his people, the sympathy and kindness of friends is peculiarly acceptable.

We find the sentiment of the text, as now expressed, fully proved and exemplified in the character and history of Job. In proof of his piety we have the testimony of the highest authority, even that of God himself, by whom

he is styled a perfect and upright man. The manner in which he managed his family fully proved that he did fear God and eschew evil. "He sanctified his children, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually." The resolution of Joshua, seemed to be his steady purpose,—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—He not only had the best of riches in heaven, but extensive possessions on earth; so that this man was greatest of all the men of the east. He had a very great household, and in his flocks he numbered many thousands. To him there were born seven sons and three daughters. Heaven seemed to smile on all, to which he put his hand, and on all with which he was connected.

Here we see the good man rising with the flowing tide of prosperity. But alas the time had come, when God would assert his right to reverse the scene, and pull down as well as build up. God, who had smiled upon his devoted servant, drew about himself clouds and darkness; and opened before Job a scene of sorrow, a succession of calamities, which had not an example in the history of man.

The Most High, who raises or sinks the comforts of his creatures at his pleasure, usu-

ally causes many mercies to intervene between the strokes from the hand of correction. The case before us forms an exception to this general rule. When God began, he moved on in spreading desolation and death about his servant, till he fell down before him, and said, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.” The messengers, who brought an account of his losses in property and servants, followed each other in quick succession. One had scarcely finished his story before another came. Thus in a few moments he saw himself let down from affluence to absolute poverty. He seems to have listened to all this with silent astonishment, enquiring no doubt why God dealt thus with him. We may well suppose, while his riches fled in different ways, he might have consoled himself in the recollection that he had friends, whose life was inconceivably more valuable than the continuance of riches. But he little knew what remained yet to be told. What he had heard was but the beginning of sorrow; but a small part of what God had already done.

“There came another servant and said, thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house, and behold, there came a great wind from the

wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped."

The very mention of his children, after such repeated losses, must have excited feelings, to which every heart, except that of the parent, is a stranger. Whatever he might have imagined, it could not have been more dreadful than the event. It was not one, two, five, or even nine, but the ten were taken. None were left to weep with a bereaved father. Heaven, the elements and men, all seem to have armed themselves, and combined to make a finish of his comforts in a single day.

Did circumstances require, we might follow the narrative still farther, and see waves of sorrow and billows of trouble still more dreadful roll over him. But we will pursue the dealings of God with this man no farther. We only ask, that it may be clearly understood and distinctly recollected, that this was a truly righteous man, and that all his pains, disappointments, and trials were ordered and directed by God.

Were it necessary to offer farther proof, that the hand of God at times rests heavily on his own people, we might present you a

list of names like that given by Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews.—“They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword ; they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented ; of whom the world was not worthy ; they wandered in desarts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth.”

Indeed I need not look back to the prophets, or even to our fathers, to illustrate and prove the sentiment before us. The passing events of each day, and the scenes, with which we are perpetually conversant, show that many are the afflictions of the righteous. While they are subject to the same passions as other men, and sustain all the relations of life ; they are subject to the same bereavements and losses. They know the strength of conjugal affection ; they feel the tenderness of parental love, and all the various ties of nature ; consequently what it is to have these cords broken, and these connexions dissolved.

We proceed to observe that the sympathy and pity of friends under these circumstances are peculiarly acceptable. In every condition of human life remove all friends, and this world is changed into a dreary abode indeed,

particularly in adversity. That such friendship is a duty, may be proved by the example of all good men in their intercourse with men of sorrow, especially of the household of faith. Among the many examples we might introduce, one only will be given. This is found in the character of Job. His language is as follows.—“Did not my heart weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor? Did not he that made me in the womb make him, and did not one fashion us in the womb? If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; (for from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother’s womb :) If I have seen any perish for want of clothing; or any poor without covering; If his loins have not blessed me, and if his loins were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate; then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.” Such had been the feelings, and such the conduct of the man, who makes the pathetic appeal in the text. He only asked that others should do to him, as he had done to the sons and daughters of sorrow. He now felt the need

of having that kindness reciprocated which he had manifested toward such as experienced a reverse of fortune. The bitterness of his spirit, the anguish of his soul, taught him that the pity of friends would be like a cordial or an healing balm.

Even the Savior himself seemed to call for the same sympathy, while his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. When bearing the iniquities of a ruined world, he enquired of his disciples, if they could not watch with him one hour. As much as if he had said, "Are not my sufferings and my sorrows an object of sufficient interest to induce you to dispense with sleep for a single hour? Have you not sympathy enough for your suffering Savior to make a sacrifice so inconsiderable?"

So important and valuable is the kindness and pity shown to a friend in adversity, that the Apostle tells us, pure and undefiled religion is to visit the widow and the fatherless in affliction, together with keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.

Little attentions, that would be unnoticed in prosperity, are magnified into important favors in a day of trouble. The kindness of a servant in affliction is more important than the attention of a monarch in prosperity. A man in affluence may learn who are pleased with his favors, but a man in the depths of

sorrow becomes acquainted with his real friends.

Suffer me to rest the proof of this point on the experience of this congregation. Call to mind, my brethren, the day when, by some unexpected providence, you lost your worldly substance. Remember when an affectionate father or tender mother slept in death.— Think of the day, which tore from your bosom some beloved child. Look over your feelings when left a widow, with a number of helpless and fatherless children. Let the scene pass in review, when the desire of your eyes, the companion of your youth, the mother of your children, sunk into the arms of death, and with a flattering tongue bid you a long, a final farewell. What impressions were then made by the pity and kindness of such as were alive to your sorrow, and mingled their tears with yours? Were they not deep and lasting, and will they not go with you down to the bed of death? Who then but must say with Solomon, "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

It remains that we improve and apply the subject in conformity to the mournful circumstances under which we are assembled.

1. Does the hand of affliction rest upon the habitation of the righteous? Then we may conclude there are important reasons why it should be so. God never forgets his promise,

that all things shall work together for good to them that love him. When in the hottest furnace, one like unto the Son of God is sent to walk with them. The good mans God intends he shall have beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and a garment of praise for a spirit of heaviness. If a right eye be taken out, or a right hand taken off, it is that their entrance into heaven may be made sure. Since he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve his children, if they are called to relinquish their choicest earthly blessings, it only increases their eternal weight of glory. "What I do ye know not now, but ye shall know hereafter," is written by the finger of God on every trial of the saints.

2. The child of God in all his trials has an unfailing source of consolation. The cup, however bitter, is mixed and given him by that God in whose government he has the utmost confidence. Job, when he called for the pity of friends, was careful to tell them, it was not by chance he was in trouble, the hand of God had touched him. The christian has not to say, when accumulated sorrows and trials await him, an enemy hath done this.— No: he sees the hand of wisdom, of mercy, and of kindness in it all. He sees that the whole matter was directed by his best friend. He may well enquire, "Shall we receive good from the hand of the Lord, and shall we not

receive evil?" The believer is satisfied that his God does not change, when his own circumstances are changed. In this the saints have always found their consolation in adversity, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good." When darkness and clouds are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

3. If the pity and kindness of friends are peculiarly acceptable to the sons and daughters of affliction, then the people of God have it in their power to do much, which may smooth the rugged path to a neighbor. Hear what the Savior says.—"In as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Open your ear then to hear the story of your neighbor's sorrows, and your heart to his sufferings.—You do, you must meet with many in this vale of tears, whose circumstances commend them to your commiseration. Let the abode of poverty and want be cheered by your kindness. Let the pillow of the sick and dying be softened by your prayers and gracious words. Let the house of mourning see that your heart is made of tenderness;—that you are willing to share a part in the sufferings of the afflicted. Never, my brethren, be deaf to the entreaty in the text. "*Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.*"

4. If the condition of the afflicted call for consolation and the compassion of friends, then the present circumstances of him, who is the Pastor of this church, speak most feelingly the language of the text.

Dear Brother, you will permit me freely to express the feelings of my heart on this occasion. Little did I think, when solemnizing the covenant between you and your beloved Mary, I should so soon be called to tender the sympathies of my heart to you, while the mourning father of motherless children. But so it is, my Brother, God hath taken from you a beloved part of yourself; the dearest of all earthly friends to you. Be assured that he who speaks feels for you; but he cannot feel what you feel. Your heart, and yours alone, can fully know the pain of that separation which is now formed. I am fully aware that of all men, the minister of Christ most needs the company, the tenderness, the encouragement and the prayers of a good wife; and such I confidently say was yours. With a temper naturally amiable, a heart constitutionally tender and affectionate, a mind well informed, and above all with the image of Jesus stamped upon her soul by the grace of God, she was well suited to fill the station, in which the head of the church placed her.

While in her your children had a mother kind, watchful, and prayerful, who was al-

ways alive to their best interest in this and a future life; your house was made pleasant to all who called, especially to your brethren in office. In the last mentioned situation, none knew her better than I, and few have more reason to lament her death.

It was my privilege to know her, not merely as we know hundreds whose faces are familiar, but to whose hearts we are strangers.— As she was once a resident in my family, God gave me opportunity to see the graces of the christian shine in an eminent degree through that covering of humility, she ever wore. I do not say she was perfect. This her tears of contrition before God, would deny. But I do say as little guile appeared in her, as in any person I ever knew. She never in any respect saught display. From this her heart revolted. In all company a low place was chosen for herself, and an exalted one for her Savior. She practically said, 'God forbid that I should glory in any thing, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which I am crucified to the world, and the world to me.' The glory of God, the honor of his Son, the success of truth, and the salvation of sinners, constituted the supreme end and measure of her actions.

Who then but must see, my afflicted friend, that she was calculated to make your life happy, your house to you the most desirable place on earth, and no less to promote your

usefulness as a minister of Christ. But I would not forget, that I am doing that which is like taking here and there a sentence from a volume, and placing them before one, who is acquainted with all it contains. You knew her virtues and consequently how to estimate her worth. You saw her humility, her love for the truth, her zeal for God. But she is gone. Yes, dear Sir, yours was the mournful privilege of seeing her die ; or rather fall asleep, a privilege of which many who loved her were deprived.

You had opportunity to see her faith, her submission, her confidence, tried by a protracted and most painful confinement. When God put forth his hand and touched her, she did not, as the enemy would direct, deny God ; but calmly said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord and shall we not receive evil?" A greater opportunity you could not have asked to see that your wife, in spirit, was assimilated to Christ, and suited to higher enjoyments than the church militant could afford. You saw her faith unshaken, her hope gather strength, and her evidences brighten. You beheld her transporting views at the opening scenes of a better world. You saw that she could take her leave of father, mother, brother, and sister, without a wish to protract her stay. And more, that she could leave those lovely sons

with her God, over whom she had shed so many tears of parental tenderness and christian anxiety. And, what is still more than all, tho' she loved her husband, she loved her Jesus more, and desired to depart and be with him.

While you may say, in this repeated stroke of divine providence, 'whose sorrow is like unto my sorrow,' let not your heart forget the mercies, with which your cup is mixed.— Newell, far removed from his native home, from christian society, and the sympathizing tears of family relatives, resigned his Harriet to the hand of death. You have passed these deep waters in the bosom of the church, in your own house, furnished with every convenience, and attended by the kindest father and the most affectionate mother.

May I not, my afflicted brother, commend you to that grace, which so abundantly supported your departed companion? Has not God already made his promise good, "My grace is sufficient for thee?" Did you not find it so, while lamenting the loss of a former, and most valuable wife? You will find God faithful in all trials, through which you may pass, before you join them that sleep in Jesus. I would not needlessly aggravate your sorrows, but permit me to say in conclusion, you have yet to know much of the loss you sustain, This you will see more in connexion

with your children than in any other way. When you look on them, when you hear them weep, when you see them sick, the wound will be opened afresh, and you may exclaim, 'O the loss of a mother's care.' But did not their mother say, and that repeatedly, she could trust them with God? May you be enabled to do likewise. Apply to your own case those considerations you have so often offered to others under similar circumstances. Look to that God to whom you have pointed others in affliction. I hope, I pray, you may have more wisdom, more grace, and act more in character, as a minister of Christ, than I should, were my soul in your souls stead. Finally, my brother, be strong in the Lord. In the multitude of your thoughts let the comforts of God delight your soul; and know, that a few more trials, a few more tears, and conflicts, and the victory is won, the crown is yours.

The father and mother of our departed sister remind us of our text. With you, my dear friends, I know how to feel. You have lost an only daughter, yes your Mary is gone to return no more. Twice I have been called myself to cast the last wishful look toward an only son. Mine lived to gain my affections and then died.—Your daughter lived to be a blessing to your declining years, and doubtless you might have expected her to smooth your dying pillow and then follow you to the

grave. This you now see was not God's way, She was ripe for the harvest, and to ripen you she has entered the kingdom first. She was all you could ask in a child. God has taken from you a valuable gift; but remember it is no more than he gave. For a moment enquire how much right you had in this object of your parental love. She belonged to God by creation. He preserved her in the midst of death more than thirty years. He gave his own and only Son to redeem her. He sent his Spirit to renew and sanctify her heart. You consecrated her to God in her infancy, and what is more, she gave herself to God and that by your consent. Must you not say on a review of these circumstances, is it not the language of your heart, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be his name."

If she could speak on this occasion, would she not say, 'Beloved parents dry your tears?' "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good." If you loved me in life, and desired and prayed for my highest happiness, be assured it is now promoted by my removal from you. My body, which was so long the subject of pain, is now at rest; and my spirit, which was burdened with sin, is now set at liberty and admitted to the uninterrupted enjoyment of him, whom my soul loved on earth.' You loved her too much to have hep

kept out of heaven a single hour for your personal gratification. But after all, experience has taught me that the parent's heart will bleed and the tear will fall at the recollection of a beloved child, who has taken a final leave of earthly connexions. Be it so.—David wept bitterly at the death of a child, and gave vent to his feelings in the most moving strains. "And the king was much moved and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Christ himself has given us an example of weeping at the grave of one he greatly loved. In this hour there is consolation, much consolation. Tho' your daughter will not return to you, you will go to her.—The gray hairs tell me the day is not far distant. She, who so often met you at her door and welcomed you to her earthly mansion, will meet you at the gate of heaven and welcome you to the participation of those joys which are not interrupted by separation. In your remaining days quicken your step in the narrow way. As you have now but one child to pray for, let your prayers for him be more frequent and more fervent. As you love the children, who are now left without a mother, do as Mary did. Pray for them. Afflicted friends, we commend you to that God, who is

able to conduct you through every tribulation and bring you to the rest remaining for his people.

The affliction of the surviving brother together with his companion, in our consolatory addresses, calls for a remembrance. The loss you sustain in the example and prayers of your sister, time itself cannot estimate.— For your salvation she felt the deepest concern? About this she conversed; for this she prayed, But her work is done. Her feet stand on the other side of Jordan. It now remains that you be as she was in all things, in which she was like her Divine Master. It was to the last her desire, that all the influence given you by the rank you hold in society should be consecrated to God. Permit me to ask, have you the same precious faith you saw in her? Have you that gracious hope which cheered her soul in the near approach of death? If so, you have consolation in the day of trial.

Turn your eyes toward your bereaved brother, then toward the remains of your departed sister, and learn what may soon be witnessed in your own family. Look on the motherless child, recollect the infant; then let your own children pass before your minds, without father or mother, and will not the anticipation awaken you to the discharge of every parental duty, with a hope that your

children, should they be orphans, may have a father, a friend in heaven. All you do for your own salvation must be done soon. All the prayers you offer for your children, must be offered soon. All you do to promote the interests of Zion, must be done soon. For this I say, beloved friends, time is short. While you mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, and see that the end of that man is peace; may yours be the life which is connected with such a death; that when you shall have served your generation, you may recommence your acquaintance with her who is gone in the songs and joys of a better state.

Other particular relatives of the deceased and of the bereaved husband must be passed without particular attention, not however without our most sincere sympathy and fervent prayers.

For a moment we turn our attention to the church in this place. Beloved in the Lord, another is taken from your number. In this you have not only lost a sister, who deservedly stood high in your estimation, but your minister has lost his dearest earthly friend. He is left, as you see him this day, with two motherless children. Turn your eyes to that part of the house, where this affecting sight is to be seen. I ask you to do this; for if a minister, in his affliction, does not find

friends and consolation in the church, where on earth shall he expect to find it. May he, who is now in the depths of sorrow, find in every member of this church a heart open to his grief. Stay not by your own fire-sides and wish him consolation. Go to his house; visit him in his trouble, and manifest by your conduct, that you know the hand of the Lord hath touch'd him. Let him not have occasion to say hereafter, that any brother or sister has been guilty of a neglect so great, as not once to have entered his doors in his trouble. Wait for no formalities; the case admits of none; it requires none. Has not your minister been attentive to your bed, and to your house, when a house of mourning? Return this kindness; it is your duty; God has made it so. He is a man, and but a man, subject to all the feelings and tender ties of other men; and comforted by the same things, that comfort other men. Tho' you will see no Mrs. Dexter in his house, you will see her afflicted husband, and motherless children there. Did she not feel for the orphan? Were not her tears ready to flow when looking on a family as hers now is, and was she not ready to administer as God gave her ability for their benefit? Has she not left an example in this respect worthy your imitation?

I am aware, my friends, that you have been kind to your minister in this day of trouble;

As I love my brother, I feel bound to acknowledge all you have ever done, and pray that you may be rewarded. But permit me to say, let brotherly kindness continue and abound. His troubles will not end in a day, hence your sympathies must not.

The sisters in this church will find a void in the social circle, and in all associations for benevolent purposes and prayer. She who modestly led you in your devotions and charitable efforts, is taken from you. Her seat is vacated, her voice is silenced by death. Let your prayer-meetings be continued. She may be present in spirit. Let the heathen be remembered, and let not your contributions cease, because that name which so often accompanied them is written on the records of the dead. May a mantle like hers fall on each of you, that like her you may be loved in life and lamented in death.

My fathers and brethren in the ministry, while we aid in the solemnities of this day, and feel for our afflicted brother, let us apply the same to ourselves. Let this day admonish us to be more prayerful, more watchful, more faithful. As we can be animated by the presence and instructed by the conversation of our sister no more, let us not be satisfied with a cold recollection of her virtues without any desire to emulate them. Which of us will next be called to these trials is known on-

ly to that God, from whom I pray we may have support. Shall we be found pursuing the determination of Joshua? Blessed is that servant who when his Lord cometh shall be found thus employed.

I have but a word to say to this congregation, and then we part, it may be to meet no more. You have seen how the christian dies, and what are his consolations. Such cannot be your end, nor such your support, except you are born again. It is the religion of the Bible that does this, not a delusive system of man's devising. Dismiss all your vain hopes, lay aside your opposition to truth, renounce your confidence in error, and believe in Christ. So your end shall be that of the righteous, and your reward an unfading crown of glory. Amen.

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